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# Foreign Policy by Fiat: An Examination of the United States Decision Making Process on Iraq from 1990-1998

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Claremont McKenna College

Foreign Policy by Fiat: An Examination of  
the United States Decision Making Process  
on Iraq from 1990-1998

Submitted to  
Professor Lisa Koch

By  
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For  
Senior Thesis  
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## Chapter 1: Introduction

If you pick up a newspaper, watch a political network, or engage in a conversation with a coworker you are likely to come upon the topic of threats to America. Is North Korea's nuclear weapons program an existential threat to the United States? How does climate change effect our national security? These questions are topical and are highlighted in the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS identifies multiple threats including "catastrophic attacks against the U.S. homeland, attacks against our allies, economic crises, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), infectious diseases, climate change, energy disruption, and weak states."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the NSS notes the following actors: China, Russia, North Korea, ISIS, and Al Qaida as existential threat to the United States.<sup>2</sup> The 2017 NSS included the Iranian regime, and all previously mentioned actors in the 2015 NSS as existential threats to the United States.<sup>3</sup> Concurring with the NSS, multiple scholars have written extensively on how these actors threaten the United States led international order and the continental United States.<sup>4</sup>

Along with the threats currently listed new threats arise over time. These threats can be a result of a large build up over time (ISIS) or via a sudden break down in

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<sup>1</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, D.C.: NSS, February 2015, p. 2 <<http://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2015.pdf>>.

<sup>2</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 7-11.

<sup>3</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy*, Washington, D.C.: December 2017, p. II

<sup>4</sup> On Russia see: Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, "NATO Commander: Russia Poses 'Existential Threat' to West", RFE, February 25, 2016, <<https://www.rferl.org/a/nato-breedlove-russia-existential-threat/27574037.html>>, On North Korea see: Atlantic Council, "The 'Existential Threat' Posed by North Korea", *Atlantic Council*, July 28, 2017 <<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-existential-threat-posed-by-north-korea>>, Matthew Pennington, "North Korea poses 'existential threat, US intel chief warns", *Military Times*, May 11, 2017, <<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2017/05/11/north-korea-poses-existential-threat-us-intel-chief-warns/>>, On ISIS see: Frederick W. Kagan et al. "Al Qaeda and ISIS: Existential Threats to The U.S. and Europe", *Institute for the Study of War*, 2016, <<http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/PLANEX%20Report%201%20--%20FINALFINALFINAL.pdf>>.

governance that could lead to instability within a region (Venezuela). While there seems to be a hierarchical system of threat, usually marked by a tier level, any action could be construed as an existential or destabilizing threat.<sup>5</sup> The tier levels allow for the government to categorize threats, ranging from high priority to low priority.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, a threat can emerge after a foreign actor engages with the United States. Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor and the subsequent war is one example of how a threat can emerge. Even if a country poses no immediate threat, the United States can claim that, in the future a state has an ability to pose a threat.<sup>7</sup> If a country meets any of the listed criteria, the United States can use military force to meet its objective.<sup>8</sup> In the past, the United States has used its military to fight threats and remove dictators that could pose further threats against the homeland.<sup>9</sup>

The NSS is clear, the United States can create a causal link between any international activity and the national security interest of the United States. This doctrine allows the United States to intervene in international affairs under the guise of securing a

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<sup>5</sup> The best current example of a threat being labeled a national security threat is Venezuela. In 2015 President Obama deemed Venezuela a national security threat. Jeff Mason, Roberta Rampton, "U.S. declares Venezuela a national security threat, sanctions top officials", Reuters, March 9, 2015, <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-venezuela/u-s-declares-venezuela-a-national-security-threat-sanctions-top-officials-idUSKBN0M51NS20150310>>, In 2017 President Trump solidified the threat and hinted at that he was considering using the military to end the social unrest. The New York Times, "Trump Alarms Venezuela With Talk of a Military Option", *The New York Times*, August 12, 2017, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/12/world/americas/trump-venezuela-military.htm>>, Furthermore, think tanks have provided supplementary articles highlighting the threat of Venezuela Michaela Frai and Alex Entz, "Venezuela is on fire and US national security will get burned", *The Hill*, July 15, 2017 <<http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/foreign-policy/342149-venezuela-is-on-fire-and-the-us-will-get-burned>>, Moises Rendon, "Why Venezuela Should Be a U.S. Foreign Policy Priority", *CSIS*, August 17, 2017 <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-venezuela-should-be-us-foreign-policy-priority>>.

<sup>6</sup> An example of the tier scheme can be seen in: Paul B. Stevens, "Preventive Priorities Survey: 2014," *Council on Foreign Relations*, December 13, 2013 <<https://www.cfr.org/report/preventive-priorities-survey-2014>>.

<sup>7</sup> This doctrine is known as preemptive and preventive war. The distinction between the two doctrines is negligible.

<sup>8</sup> White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> The United States launched a preventive war against Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power. This theme of military action will be discussed in Chapters 3 & 5.

national interest. The effectiveness and efficiency of this doctrine is widely debated in academic and policy forums.<sup>10</sup> Debates on the United States grand strategy and its future role in the international order are essential. However, those debates should be secondary to the question of how a threat came is identified. Understanding how an actor becomes a threat is an *a priori* issue. If grand strategy is a finished jigsaw puzzle, then the identification of threats represents the corner pieces. The lack of a threat identification process, leads to foreign policy decisions not anchored to a framework and thus grand strategy fails. Without fully understanding the threat identification policy process the debates related to national security remains incomplete.

If understanding how an actor becomes a threat is truly an *a priori* issue, then investigating the threat identification process should act as the starting point for academic research. Therefore, I will attempt to answer the following question, how does the United States identify threats? To answer that question there are many secondary questions that need to be posed. One question involves the bureaucratic nature, how are national security decisions made? Once a decision is made that a state threatens the United States national interest, what is the process for implementing a policy to counter the identified threat? To answer these questions I will investigate the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administration's Iraq policy. In each case study I attempt to pinpoint the moment when Iraq or in the latter case Saddam Hussein, became a threat to the U.S. interest. After the

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<sup>10</sup> The two sides in laymen terms can be described as interventionist and isolationist. These two terms are over simplifications and use of these terms can cause serious misinterpretation of core principles within the two ideologies. Since this thesis primary focus is on threat construction and not on grand strategy those terms will be used. For an example of an interventionist point of view see: Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment", *Foreign Affairs*, 1990, <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1991-02-01/unipolar-moment>>, For an example of an isolationist point of view see: The Week Staff, "A brief history of Americans isolationism", *The Week*, June 5, 2016, <<http://theweek.com/articles/627638/brief-history-american-isolationism>>.



threat is identified, I then track the policy changes the United States made related to the identified threat.

As I recreate the bureaucratic process, I try to identify whether a decision is made on an ad-hoc basis or in a manner consistent with a former U.S. policy. Ad-hoc policy is a sign of an ineffective grand strategy. By its very nature, ad-hoc decisions are made with a heavy focus on the short-term and fail to consider long term strategic goals. Grand strategy, defined as the means that are used to achieve long-term objectives, is incompatible with ad-hoc decision-making.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the lack of a threat identification process and the resulting policy actions made in an ad-hoc manner undermines a long-term grand strategy approach. Consequently, a coherent and successful grand strategy depends on a uniform and institutionalized approach to threat identification.

### **Explanation of Threats**

One explanation for why there is always a threat to an international actor is the notion of a security dilemma.<sup>12</sup> The security dilemma is rooted in the ideas of realism; each state is an individual rational actor in an anarchist society and each state vies to maintain its security.<sup>13</sup> To become secure, a state must pursue means that gives it an advantage over the state it's competing with. This lead to the pursuance of absolute security. However, the pursuit by one state to become absolutely secure will lead rival states to adopt means to balance that states power. Therefore, the security dilemma posits

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<sup>11</sup> Colin Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History* (New York City: Routledge, 2007) P. 283.

<sup>12</sup> For more on the security dilemma see: John H. Hertz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma", *World Politics* 2, no.2 (Jan., 1950) 157-180, Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma", *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (Jan., 1978): 167-214, & Charles L. Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited", *World Politics* 50, no. 1 (Oct., 1997): 171-201.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories", *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (Spring, 1998) 29-32+34-46  
<<http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/hpschmitz/PSC124/PSC124Readings/WaltOneWorldManyTheories.pdf>>.

that warring factions are inevitable in the international system.<sup>14</sup> If less powerful states are trying to maintain pace with more powerful states or in a multilateral system, multiple states are trying to become the global hegemon then threats and conflicts are intrinsic to the international system. As noted earlier the United States reports multiple threats on multiple continents as being security concerns. As other states catch up to the United States in terms of military strength and economic power the United States will face even more threats.

Another realist theory, the balance of threats theory<sup>15</sup>, tries to provide an answer for why states engage in conflict. Stephen Walt's balance of threats theory identifies four factors for why states engage in conflict; aggregate power, offensive capability, geographical proximity, and aggressive intentions.<sup>16</sup> This theory helps intellectuals and policymakers understand why certain states engage in power struggles. The balance of threats and security dilemma can be used to frame the current and future thought process of the United States, threats are present, resilient, and persistent.

However, neither of the theories discussed above, can be used as the primary tool to describe how threats are securitized, because they fail to identify how the threat identification policy process works. In the abstract, the theories assume that states actions are rational, and therefore any action taken by a state is in the pursuit of its vested interest. However, state actions made ad-hocly are not always rational, and therefore the precondition of the security dilemma and balance of threats theory is not met. One

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<sup>14</sup> John H. Hertz, 157

<sup>15</sup> For more on the balance of threats theory see: Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and Balance of Power", *International Security* 9, no. 4 (Spring, 1985) 3-43  
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2538540.pdf?refreqid=excelsior:5c18e0d0d9d238fac2b112dae423e6d7>>.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Press 1987).

example of this disconnect between theory and policy is the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003. In 2002, a group of realist scholars wrote an ad for the New York Times that said, “War With Iraq is NOT In America’s National Interest.”<sup>17</sup> Despite the scholar’s pleas, the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. The realist theories cannot explain the U.S. threat identification of Iraq, and therefore a process needs to be developed on how the United States identifies threats.

Currently there is not a theory that captures the security policy-making process. Likewise, the policy realm lacks institutional guidelines on how a state becomes an existential threat. Not being able to study the securitization process severely hampers policy makers and academics alike. The lack of institutional guidelines, leads to ad-hoc decision making, which has numerous drawbacks. First, ad-hoc decision making favors risk-seeking members over risk adverse members. This sentiment is capture by former Vice President Dick Cheney’s one-percent doctrine. The one-percent doctrine posits “if a threat has even a one percent chance of becoming a reality, it requires enormous resources to mitigate.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the United States past actions dictates that on matters related to foreign policy action is better than inaction.<sup>19</sup> Second, an ad-hoc policy process is easier to manipulate. When a political actor adopts a policy preference then dissent becomes unacceptable. In the lead up to the 2003 Iraq war, institutional dissent fell on deaf ears. Intelligence agents, who questioned the President’s WMD narrative, the

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<sup>17</sup> 33 International Relation Scholars, “War With Iraq is NOT In America’s National Interest,” *New York Times*, September 26, 2002 <<http://www.bear-left.com/archive/2002/0926oped.html>>.

<sup>18</sup> John Glaser, “Truth, Power, and the Academy: A Response to Hal Brands,” *War on the Rocks*, March 26, 2018 <<https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/truth-power-and-the-academy-a-response-to-hal-brands/>>.

<sup>19</sup> Emma Ashford, “Trump’s Syria Strikes Show What’s Wrong With U.S. Foreign Policy,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2018 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/opinion/trump-us-foreign-policy.html>>.

main justification for war, found that their concerns did not make the official report to Congress.<sup>20</sup>

When an unknown non-state actor poses a threat in a particularly unstable region policy makers scramble to assign risk to that actor. During this scramble policy makers have to conduct an internal cost benefit analysis. What are the effects of dismissing the risk? What are the effects of making the risk hyperbolic? If a policy maker dismisses a risk and the risk ends up being a real and menacing threat to the United States then the policy maker and her institution's credibility suffer. The agency might lose key influence with policy makers, or future reports by the agency could be viewed skeptically. On the other hand, if the agency oversells the risk of the actor and it turns out that the actor is benign, the agency is not punished. Therefore, within the national security institutions, individuals are incentivized to inflate risks.

A review of America's foreign policy found that threats are constantly overinflated. Policy makers, in particular, have an added pressure to inflate threats.<sup>21</sup> The pressure to perform increases when the government fails to prevent an attack on the homeland. After 9/11, there was a serious discussion pertinent to the CIA's ability to perform its duty. Another failure would have dictated more than a serious discussion, and would have likely led to institutional restructuring of the CIA. Institutional changes undermine the ability of an organization. Therefore, maintaining the organizational status-quo was the CIA's top priority post 9/11. When it came time for the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in 2002 the CIA endorsed the President's assessment, and the

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<sup>20</sup> These are just two examples from Glaser's "Truth, Power, and the Academy" article. <<https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/truth-power-and-the-academy-a-response-to-hal-brands/>>.

<sup>21</sup> John Mueller, "Simplicity and Spook: Terrorism and the Dynamics of Threat Exaggeration," *International Studies Perspectives* 6 (2005), p. 208-234

report was rife with risk inflation.<sup>22</sup> As mentioned earlier, intelligence agents who voiced concerns about the report, were merely mentioned in passing.

One agency that could demand that the threat identification policy process becomes more transparent is Congress. Under the Constitution the President is the commander in chief however he lacks the authority to declare war or fund the military.<sup>23</sup> A popularized argument within the Beltway is that Congress does not have to fund a President's military adventure if it disagrees with the strategy or the involvement of United States troops. This statement while popular, is fallacious because Congress becomes the scapegoat once it gets involved on matters dealing with foreign policy.<sup>24</sup> Even when Congress and the President fundamentally disagree about an issue relating to foreign policy, the executive branch typically implements its preferred policy.<sup>25</sup>

If Congress took a sudden interest in the threat identification policy process, they would still lack the means for reform. Congress relies on the executive branch for information and updates on U.S. strategic interests. The executive branch does not have a reciprocal reliance on Congress for issues dealing with foreign affairs. This one-way relationship undermines Congress's ability to regulate and demand answers on the securitization process. Notwithstanding this one-way relationship, if Congress gained the ability to demand transparency over the process it has been noted that there is a lack of a

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<sup>22</sup> Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II*, (Vintage Books: New York, 2007) P. 146-149

<sup>23</sup> While lacking the power to declare war the President still has the authority to engage in foreign actions. See: The War Powers Resolution

<sup>24</sup> As Chapter 3 will show, Congress can be put into predicaments where the deck is stacked against them, and they have to cede to the President's preferred policy option.

<sup>25</sup> Daniel W. Drezner, "The polarization of American foreign policy turns out to not matter so much — for now", *The Washington Post*, 09/08/2015  
<[https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/09/08/the-polarization-of-american-foreign-policy-turns-out-to-not-matter-so-much-for-now/?utm\\_term=.ae721cd05375](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/09/08/the-polarization-of-american-foreign-policy-turns-out-to-not-matter-so-much-for-now/?utm_term=.ae721cd05375)>.

process. Congress's demand for a securitization process would deplete resources from policy makers and could undermine policymaker's ability to react to emerging situations. The demand from Congress therefore would result in an undue burden for policy makers and could become a scapegoat for executive failures.

Academics can play a specialized role in the process, as they are removed from the initial situation, which prevents confirmation bias, but they are entrenched in a place of power where their scholarly work can influence current and future policy makers. Policymakers who were involved with the securitized event are likely to draw conclusions based on their personal experience and therefore cannot investigate the threat identification process. The academics do not have to create a new theory and can rely on the securitization framework introduced by the Copenhagen School of Security Studies.<sup>26</sup>

The theory of securitization focuses on the threat identification process. A political actor, an audience, and a context make up the core components of the securitization model.<sup>27</sup> The synergy of the three components leads to a securitization move, which is an escalation in policy related to an identified threat.<sup>28</sup> Chapter two will further discuss the securitization theory and how this thesis plans on identifying a securitization move.

A primary concern with the securitization theory is that the theory is ex-post facto. Knowledge of the actor, the audience, and the context can only be acquired after

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<sup>26</sup> The Copenhagen theory of securitization is considered a radical constructivist theory. The theory of securitization was first introduced in the book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* written by Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde and Ole Waever. In modern literature these authors are referred to as first wave securitization scholars. For more on the history of securitization: Holger Stritzel, "Securitization Theory and the Copenhagen School", In: *Security in Translation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Leonard, and Jan Ruzicka, "Securitization revisited: theory and cases", *International Relations* 30(4) 2016: 495

<sup>28</sup> Rita Floyd, "Extraordinary or ordinary emergency measures: what, and who, defines the 'success' of securitization," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28(2) 2016, p. 679.

the fact. To dismiss a theory because it cannot offer a precursor hypothesis for an action is not a reason to dismiss the theory. The securitization process is a systematic review of an event through the lens of the three components. Learning more about each instance of securitization lead to the emergence of patterns these patterns will help scholars understand how a threat became a threat and what successful strategies were used by previous actors in securitizing the threat. Additionally, the diagnostic approach gives scholars an opportunity to offer reforms to the current process. Furthermore, if Congress begins to understand the securitization process it will help guide them in decision making and questioning the executive securitization of an issue.

An area where scholars can add to the securitization theory is by developing a parallel process to the overarching view of securitization by focusing on the internal process of securitization. The internal process, which I define as the process of securitizing the President, meets the same criteria of general securitization, it has an actor, an audience, and there is a context. Hypothetical the national security advisor (NSA) could act as the actor, the President would be the audience, and the context could be a new intelligence report or a recent action taken by an enemy state. The ex-post facto problem is more prolific in these instances, since most interactions between cabinet members and President are classified. However, a review of the interaction between the cabinet and the President can lead to better understanding of the threat identification process.

Chapter two will build upon Chapter one's discussion of the securitization theory. In Chapter two there will be an in-depth discussion on the three securitization

components and the synergy of the components, which leads to the securitization move. Furthermore, I will set out the methodology I will in my subsequent case studies.

Chapter three will look at the George H. Bush Presidency and his handling of the Gulf War. This case study will address the ad-hoc decision making, in addition to examining intelligence agencies actions after Iraq invaded Kuwait. Specifically, I will be looking at whether agencies took more risks after failing to alert the President of the initial Iraq invasion. Also this chapter will focus on the relationship between President Bush and Congress. At first glance President Bush's action seem to align with what historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. defines as the Imperial President. However, President Bush still needed Congressional approval, so studying the dynamic between an imperial President and Congress will be a major theme in Chapter three.

In Chapter four I look at the Clinton administration's handling of Iraq. I will focus on 1998, the year President Clinton launched airstrikes against Iraqi WMD facilities, commonly referred to as Operation Desert Fox.<sup>29</sup> During this time, Congress played an active role in foreign policy. On October 31, 1998, President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act, which was the first time America formally adopted a policy of regime change toward Iraq. The relationship between President Clinton and Congress will be a major theme examined in Chapter four.

Chapter five is the conclusion chapter. I will take important findings from the two previous mentioned case studies, and give some insight into the ad-hoc policy making process. Additionally, I provide recommendations for institutional changes as it relates to the threat identification process.

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<sup>29</sup> William M. Arkin, "The Difference Was in the Details," *The Washington Post*, January 17, 1999 <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/iraq/analysis.htm>>.



The primary purpose of this thesis is not to critique the current understanding of American foreign policy; instead the purpose is to provide a threat construction formula. The question of how a state becomes a threat, is complementary with the question of why an actor takes aggressive foreign policy actions. Additionally, if the United States wants to conduct a coherent grand strategy then it is vital to create institutional guidelines for threat identification.

## Chapter 2: Lit Review and Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, I will focus on the theory of securitization as it relates to America's foreign policy. The two instances of securitization I focus on, are the Gulf War and the Iraq Liberation Act. To grasp the process of securitization I developed a working formula constructed from existing securitization literature. First, I will review the existing securitization literature, concentrating on the three components, the actor, audience, and context. After a framework is developed, I labeled five variables: the President, Congress, the Media, the executive's cabinet, and the domestic population, that will be explored via the framework in the case studies. These five variables make-up the marketplace of ideas and synthesized the securitization process within the United States.<sup>1</sup>

A marketplace of ideas, in theory, elevates the best ideas to the forefront of the national dialogue.<sup>2</sup> In countries where freedom of speech is protected, the marketplace of ideas is robust and prevents a privileged group from monopolizing the information. Authoritarian governments, where freedom of speech is not protected, are more likely to engage in successful propaganda campaigns. The marketplace of ideas, within the United States, should be robust. However, groupthink can monopolize the marketplace of ideas, which can lead to the stymying of dissenting views. The case studies will attempt to

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the market of place of ideas is prevalent within the democracy. However, this does not mean that a market place can fail; rather it means when the market place fails it is recognized as such and is not recognized as a lack of a marketplace.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel E. Ho & Frederick Schauer, "Testing the Marketplace of Ideas," *New York University Law Review* 90 no. 1160 (October 2015), P. 1162

elucidate the individual processes, and the marketplace of ideas that led to Iraq being securitized.

### **Securitization Theory**

Thierry Balzacq is the premier scholar on matters related to securitization theory.

Balzacq defines the process of securitization as:

“An articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artifacts are contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions) about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitizing actor’s reasons for choice and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexity that customized policy must be immediately undertaken to block it.”<sup>3</sup>

To make the above definition accessible to people who have not read the securitization literature I will attempt to simplify each of Balzacq’s points. When Balzacq uses the term securitizing actor, he is referring to the person who is in a position to make decisions. The securitizing actor must have political capital because he will be the person who is trying to convince the audience to adopt his securitizing move. Political capital is a form of political currency, which an actor can use to influence or persuade an audience.<sup>4</sup> While it is impossible to measure political capital, most political science scholars agree that capital is a finite resource.<sup>5</sup> Political capital is a prerequisite for a

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<sup>3</sup> Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Leonard, and Jan Ruzicka, “Securitization revisited: theory and cases”, *International Relations* 30(4) 2016: 495.

<sup>4</sup> Frank A. Spring, “A Fool & His Political Capital Are Soon Parted: Trump Faces New Bankruptcy,” *The Huffington Post*, March 3, 2017 <[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/a-fool-his-political-capital-are-soon-parted-trump\\_us\\_58b98d07e4b0fa65b844b232](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/a-fool-his-political-capital-are-soon-parted-trump_us_58b98d07e4b0fa65b844b232)>.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2009): p. 249.

successful securitization move, therefore an elevated statesmen, the President, or a committee chairman, is most likely to be a securitizing actor.<sup>6</sup>

Techniques are available to the securitizing actor including, the power of speech and former successful securitization moves. If a President calls upon the audiences sense of patriotism that would be an example of the former technique. The audience is the group or individual the actor is trying to influence. Therefore, any move that does not require audience consent falls outside of securitization theory. For an example, when the President of the United States launches a drone strike that cannot be a securitization move. The securitization move was made when Congress delegated the power of drone strikes to the President, and subsequently all the policies made in the aftermath are the President's prerogative. When a political actor wants to significantly shift the trajectory of foreign policy and affirmative audience consent is needed. Therefore, the policy shift, otherwise known as the securitizing move, needs an audience's approval to be successful. The referent object is the thing the President wants to change, so for this thesis Iraq is the referent object. The final part, "customized policy must be immediately undertook to block it," means the threat has to be imminent.

In the same article where the above definition comes from, Thierry Balzacq refines his definition to this digestible takeaway: "the key idea underlying securitization is that an issue is given sufficient saliency to win the assent of the audience, which enables those who are authorized to handle the issue to use whatever means they deem

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<sup>6</sup> When a securitizing actor does not have political capital the securitization move is likely to fail, See: Kristian Åtland & Kristin Ven Bruusgaard, "When Security Speech Acts Misfire: Russia and the *Elektron* Incident," *Security Dialogue* 40 no. 3 (June 2009).

most appropriate.”<sup>7</sup> To grasp securitization theory, the individual parts need to be developed: the context, the actor, and the audience, but first, I need to define the securitization move.

## **Securitization Move**

The securitizing actor makes a securitization move when (s)he identifies a threat that justifies a response.<sup>8</sup> The identification must be public because a private identification would prevent an audience from participating. Additionally, the identification of a threat is the first step of the securitization process and requires additional steps before securitization is successful. According to Rita Floyd, a securitization move is successful when the actors gets approval from the audience for his policy change.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the change in policy must be justified and related to the security threat that was identified by the original securitization move.<sup>10</sup> Image 1 is a simple mathematical equation that represents the necessary components for a successful securitization move. Now that the equation of a successful securitization move has been developed, I will now transition to define the role of each individual component.

### **Image 1: The Securitization Move**

**CONTEXT + ACTOR + AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE = SUCCESSFUL SECURITIZATION MOVE**

(Identification of Threat) + (The person making the move) + (Yes from the audience)

## **Context**

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<sup>7</sup> IBID.

<sup>8</sup> Rita Floyd, “Extraordinary or ordinary emergency measures: what, and who, defines the ‘success’ of securitization?” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 29 no. 2 (2015) p. 684

<sup>9</sup> IBID.

<sup>10</sup> IBID.

While context is usually the last part highlighted by the securitization theory, it is the foundation of securitization theory. The context is the time period and atmosphere surrounding the securitization move. During the build up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the context was defined by the events that transpired on 9/11 and the subsequent War On Terror. Securitization moves made during the Cold War were made under the context of fighting communism.

Another aspect of the context is the speech act, defined as a “form of linguistic representation that positioned a particular issue as an existential threat calling for extraordinary measures.”<sup>11</sup> Within the context, the securitizing actor is the person performing the speech act. The speech act can either, help build a context around a referent object, or contextualize the referent object within the context. President George W. Bush’s Axis of Evil speech is an example of the former and President Ronald Reagan’s Evil Empire speech represents the latter. President Bush’s Axis of Evil speech attempted to create a connection between Iraq and terrorism, within the context of 9/11. Despite the lack of evidence to support his claims, President Bush was effective in using his speech act to prime the American people for war with Iraq.<sup>12</sup> The USSR had already been labeled a threat when President Ronald Reagan took office. However, President Reagan felt the need to recontextualize the threat after President Carter’s policy of détente. In both instances, the actors framed their referent object as evil, inhuman, and a threat

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<sup>11</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security a new Framework for Analysis* (Boulder Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1997) p: 26-33.

<sup>12</sup> Shahira S Fahmy, Thomas J. Johnson, Wayne Wanta, & Juyan Zhang, “The path to war: Exploring a second-level agenda-building analysis examining the relationship among the media, the public and the president,” *The International Communication Gazette* 73 no. 4 (2011), p. 327.

against all of humanity. This framing is an effective heuristic in capturing audience assent.

Another part of the context framework is the constant evolving nature of contextual threats. A static approach to context, is problematic because it limits the securitization process to a single move. As shown above the success of a securitization move depends on a multitude of steps and therefore requires a dynamic theory. By looking at securitization in a vacuum, the idea of context is void and plays no significant role in formulating the securitization process. Take the example of the United States' decision to get involved in World War I. The static approach would focus on the declaration of war in 1917 as the securitization move. By starting in 1917, the static approach discredits President Wilson's rhetoric that started in 1915, which primed the American public to accept war when the time came.<sup>13</sup> Discounting the two years prior to the start of the war distorts the context and the actors' ability to securitize the issue. Reinforcing the need for a dynamic securitization theory, scholar Matt McDonald writes, "[A securitization move] may be up for question... [It] may be at the point when an issue is defined as a security issue, at the point when an audience backs up to the designation of threat, or at the point at which extraordinary measures are implemented."<sup>14</sup> Thus, when considering context an analysis of the social, political, and historical contexts surrounding the securitized issue are required.<sup>15</sup>

## **Actor**

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<sup>13</sup> Jason C. Flangan, *Imagining the Enemy: American Presidential War Rhetoric from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush* (Claremont, California: Regina Books 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Matt McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security", *European Journal of International Relations* 14(4) 2008: 578

<sup>15</sup> McDonald 576-577.

The actor is the person who performs the speech act within the confines of the context. One common assumption about a securitizing actor is (s)he is a political elite. However, in a democracy, we have a market place of ideas, and any one person or entity that has enough political capital can become an actor.<sup>16</sup> In fact, McDonald highlights the role that news agencies and the media play in securitizing issues via images and visual representations.<sup>17</sup> Building upon this further, Holger Stritzel claims that in times of high uncertainty and insecurity where there is a lack of existing knowledge, traditional policy makers are not always the actor.<sup>18</sup> This leads Stritzel to claim that “in these contexts of significantly ruptured or not yet consolidated social fields, position of power within discourse to ‘define security’ should not simply be assumed... an assumption of authority should be replaced by the empirical study of processes of authorization.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, a proper securitization theory will not assume an actor, but will empirically investigate to determine whom an actor is according to the securitization move.

In the introduction, I suggested that securitization scholars create an internal securitization process that parallels the public securitization move. I made this suggestion because the President or Congress, the two traditional securitization actors, sometimes performs a securitization move after briefed by an actor supporting a change in policy. My example in the introduction was a hypothetical where the National Security Advisor (NSA) adopted a securitization move and then advised the President to accept the NSA’s preferred policy. In Chapter Five, I briefly mention this process when I suggest that

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<sup>16</sup> McDonald 569

<sup>17</sup> IBID

<sup>18</sup> Holger Stritzel, “Securitization, power, intertextuality: Discourse theory and the translations of organized crime”, *Security Dialogue* 43(6) 2012: 556.

<sup>19</sup> IBID



Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was the original securitization actor. However, the securitization literature is clear; a securitizing actor must have political and social capital to gain audience consent.

Therefore, I develop the notion of facilitating actors. Facilitating actors are actors who influence and securitize the information presented to the securitization actor, but lack the authorization and/or the political capital to securitize the event in public. Labeling these actors facilitators is not to discredit their role in the securitizing process; rather it highlights the bureaucratic processes that can lead to a securitizing move.<sup>20</sup>

## **Audience**

The final part of the securitization equation is the role of the audience. The idea of an audience in the securitization literature is underdeveloped.<sup>21</sup> It becomes difficult to highlight an audience who assents to the securitization of event if the audience has a different perspective than the securitizing actor. Additionally, Balzacq notes that the process of identifying an audience becomes harder when there is not a single audience but rather multiple audiences.<sup>22</sup>

While there is not an agreed definition on what makes up an audience, the securitization literature does identify audience responsibilities. The audience can grant support through a formal mechanism e.g. a Congressional vote to authorize war.<sup>23</sup> The domestic audience cannot give formal support because they do not have the power to vote

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<sup>20</sup> McDonald notes that the bureaucratic process can act in the way of a speech act that is not entirely verbal. However, for my analysis I will include the bureaucratic process in the actor section.

<sup>21</sup> Michael C. Williams, "The Continuing Evolution of Securitization Theory" in Thierry Balzacq (ed) *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 213.

<sup>22</sup> Balzacq 500.

<sup>23</sup> Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context", *European Journal of International Relations* 11(2): 184.

yes or no on the securitization issue. Since the domestic audience cannot give formal support, they rely on Congress to give formal support on their behalf. However, as noted by Thierry Balzacq, formal support “is cloaked in the semantic repertoire of the national audience to win support.”<sup>24</sup> Balzacq statement is similar to the idea of a speech act discussed above. An actor will frame the securitization move in its best light to win the assent of the audience. If the actor fails to garner support from the audience, the securitization move will fail. Therefore, the audience plays an essential role in the securitization process.

Furthering the complication of identifying the audience, in a democracy the audience can become a facilitating actor in deciding when a case of securitization fails. The idea that audience and actor in a securitization process are not static but rather fluid and evolutionary is critical to third-wave securitization.<sup>25</sup> The common example of third-wave securitization is the United States securitizing an issue within an international institution. In Dagmar Rychnovska’s work on securitization, he notes the ways that the United States can act as securitizing actor at the UN Security Council, but then they become the audience as other states have the ability to weigh in on the issue.<sup>26</sup> To incorporate this idea into domestic politics, this paper will label the prominent audience needed for the securitizing act to happen. Within the securitization act, if the audience becomes a facilitating actor, it will be labeled as such.

## **Methodology**

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<sup>24</sup> IBID 185.

<sup>25</sup> To see an example of third-wave securitization theory see: Dagmar Rychnovska, “Securitization and the Power of Threat Framing, *Perspectives* 22(2) 2014.

<sup>26</sup> IBID

In order to build upon the previously developed theoretical framework, I have decided to investigate two case studies with five constant variables. The two cases are, The Gulf War and the Iraq Liberation Act. These two events were chosen because they represented a significance departure from the previously held policies. Therefore, these moments meet the securitization move parameters set out earlier in this chapter.

To explore the case studies in depth I will be using five variables, the President, Congress, the Media, the political cabinet, and the domestic population. This thesis will follow Holger Stritzel's recommendation, and therefore I will not assume the securitization actor in the case studies. By not assigning predetermined roles to the variables, it will allow a narrative to evolve from the evidence and the securitization move will become more lucid.

In each case study, I will rely on primary sources as a method to discover the securitization move. Therefore, the case study will depend heavily on the national security archives declassified section.<sup>27</sup> There are some limitations to the scope of my study which is that some documents remain classified. Even if all the documents were declassified the volume of the documents that one would have to read to document every interaction would be overwhelming. Therefore, I will depend on research guides as well as documents, which seem relevant to the case study in framing the securitization process. The process of examining documents will also include examining the securitizing issue before the securitizing act to determine the evolving context, which is a key part of the securitization framework. Since I am focusing on events that have been

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<sup>27</sup> For more on the National Security Archives visit: <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>

successfully securitized I will not include my search for instances of when securitization could have failed because that is outside the scope of this thesis.

While the primary documents will help determine the governmental process of securitization, I developed a method to investigate the role of Congress, the Media, and the domestic population. For Congress, I kept a detailed record on Congressional votes dealing with the securitization issue as well as any hearings heard about the securitization issue around the time of the securitization process. Similarly, for the Media, I read op-ed pages of the New York Times and Washington Post during the build up to the securitizing event. I then evaluated what role the media played in further securitizing the event and whether they acted as a facilitating actor or the audience pertaining to each case study. Finally, when determining the role of the domestic public I looked to public opinion polls taken around the time of the securitization move. I not only looked at the event in question, but the populations' belief on certain issues, which helped shape the context.



## Chapter 3 The Bush Administration

On August 2, 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait, removed the Emir, and implemented a pro-Iraqi regime. The United States sat atop the international order, the Berlin Wall had fallen and the USSR was on the brink of collapse. Consequently, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait provided President Bush with an opportunity to build a "new world order" based on the principles of deterring and punishing 'naked aggression.'<sup>1</sup> However, President Bush was constrained by the Constitution. Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution vested the power to declare war to the legislative branch.<sup>2</sup> To overcome this constraint, President Bush started a game of chess, where he was allowed to move the pieces into an ideal position and then asked, or strongly suggested Congress, to accept the chess board as set.

President Bush deployed troops to Saudi Arabia, which is known as Operation Desert Shield. The decision to deploy troops was made after a series of National Security Council meetings, and a meeting with Britain's Prime Minister Margret Thatcher.<sup>3</sup> The cabinet for the most part was spilt between Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell.<sup>4</sup> Secretary Cheney advocated for an immediate troop deployment whose stated mission would be the physical security of Saudi Arabia. General Powell advised caution and advocated for restraint. The power

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<sup>1</sup> 41, George H. Bush, "Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, August 5, 1990," *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush, 1990* <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18741&st=iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Const. art. 1, § 8.

<sup>3</sup> Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), p. 36; and 41, George H. Bush, "Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom, August 6, 1990," *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush, 1990* <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18747&st=iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon and Trainor, p. 35.

struggle between the civilian and military control of the armed forces was a persistent theme and will be discussed in more detail in the cabinet section.

The cabinet acted as advisors to the President and did not participate in the initial securitizing move. The President's decision to deploy troops did not require the consent of an audience member, and therefore does not meet the definition of securitization move. There are ongoing debates on the implicit intent of Operation Desert Shield, however the debate is not settled and the information is not available to draw a conclusion.

Operation Desert Shield did not require Congressional approval. Congress, the typically audience in matters of foreign policy, granted the President authority to deploy troops defensively under the 1973 War Powers Resolution.<sup>5</sup> For the most part, members of Congress, the media, and the American people agreed with the President's action and the current situation did not dictate any further response.<sup>6</sup>

After the deployment of a 100,000 troops, a number that swelled to 265,000 during the non-securitized moment, the Bush administration started to plan an operation that would move America's posture away from defense and deterrence and toward an offensive posture. On October 12, President Bush and his cabinet hosted a team put together by CENTCOM, which discussed potential offensive options in Kuwait.<sup>7</sup> From all points of view this meeting was a failure, the operational plan was deemed insufficient. As the debate progressed it became abundantly clear that the United States

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<sup>5</sup> H.J. Res. 542, 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress, "War Powers Resolution," November 7, 1973  
<<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/93/hjres542>>.

<sup>6</sup> Congressional Quarterly, "Gulf Crisis Grows into War with Iraq," *CQ Almanac* 46, (1990),  
[https://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/document.php?id=cqal90-1118567#H2\\_4](https://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/document.php?id=cqal90-1118567#H2_4)

<sup>7</sup> Trainor and Gordon, p. 139

lacked the necessary human capital, in the region, to rid Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, this meeting was the turning point for the Bush administration.

After the meeting, President Bush implicitly abandoned the sanction and diplomacy route, and opted for military operations to expel Iraq from Kuwait.<sup>9</sup> On November 8, 1990, President Bush announced that he intended to double the number of troops in the Gulf, and shift the defensive posture to an offensive posture.<sup>10</sup> In addition to doubling the number of troops in the Gulf, President Bush worked closely with his UN ambassador, Thomas Pickering, to craft a U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), which gave an international coalition the ability to use “all necessary means” to force Iraq out of Kuwait.<sup>11</sup> President Bush had finally set the chess board, however he still needed Congress’s approval. If Congress remained silent on the issue, the administration warned that the President would play the game without Congressional approval.<sup>12</sup> President Bush preempted Congress’s role as an actor in foreign policy and regulated Congress to an audience role. Acquiring audience consent, which is requirement for a securitization move to be successful, became easier for President Bush when he placed a gun to the head of Congress and issued an ultimatum; vote for war or be left out of the process entirely. During this process, the media and the members of the cabinet played a role in pressuring the audience into accepting the securitizing move.

## Context

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<sup>8</sup> IBID.

<sup>9</sup> Trainor and Gordon, p. 141

<sup>10</sup> 41, George H. Bush, “The President’s News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis, November 8, 1990,” *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush*, 1990, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=19019&st=iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>11</sup> Security Council Resolution 678, s/res/678 (November 29, 1990) <<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/678>>.

<sup>12</sup> Congressional Quarterly



In 1989, President Bush, adopted National Security Directive (NSD) 26, the U.S. policy toward the Persian Gulf. Some sections remain excised, but the publicly available language underscored the U.S. goal in the region. The long-term vested United States' interest was access to oil.<sup>13</sup> During the 1980's and 1990's the United States heavily depended on the Middle East for domestic oil use and therefore our interests in the region were based on the free flow of oil. Additionally, the United States committed to the idea of using "necessary and appropriate use of U.S. military force" if any state came into conflict with the United States interest.<sup>14</sup> NSD 26 called for the normalization of relations between the United States and Iraq, and stated, "Normal relations would serve our interest."<sup>15</sup> The President and his staff maintained that normalization was in both countries best interest. This was the official U.S. policy until Iraq invaded Kuwait, which forced the United States to take a hard line against Iraqi aggression.

If normalization was the intended policy for the administration, Congress intended to punish Iraq for its chemical weapons use against Iran. This was a matter discussed in a meeting between Iraq's Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and Secretary of State James Baker. Secretary of State Baker assured FM Aziz that the administration's official policy was of rapprochement and normalization of relations between the two countries.<sup>16</sup> Congress continued to pursue and persuade the administration to take a stand against Saddam Hussein's human rights violation, which led to a National Security Council (NSC) deputies meeting on May 26, 1990, which discussed responses to Congress's

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<sup>13</sup> The Office of the President, (October 2, 1989), *National Security Directive 26*, Washington, DC: George H. Bush <<https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsd/nsd26.pdf>>.

<sup>14</sup> IBID.

<sup>15</sup> IBID.

<sup>16</sup> DNAS collection: Iraqgate, United States, Department of State, Secret, *Message From the Secretary to Tariq Aziz*, October 21, 1989 <<https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1679130391/F9A31F1C4DE04EA7PQ/4?accountid=10141>>.

demands.<sup>17</sup> The NSC meeting concluded that President Bush would need to do something in the near future that appeased Congress, but the policy enacted should not impede relations between Iraq and the U.S.<sup>18</sup> The debate between normalization of relations and sanctions continued until Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Before Iraq invaded Kuwait, President Saddam Hussein bashed Kuwait on the international stage. In response to President Hussein's statement, the State Department sent out a cable, which stated, "the United States remains determined to ensure the free flow of oil in the Persian Gulf."<sup>19</sup> This statement was consistent with NSD 26 and justified President Bush's deployment of troops to Saudi Arabia.

## **Cabinet**

The first Gulf War took place 27 years ago. With all its significance, very little has been written about the role of the cabinet in the lead-up to war. Chapter Four has a unique database that tracked the buildup to the invasion of Iraq. However, declassified documents for the first Gulf War are included in the "Iraqgate" a database.<sup>20</sup> The main focus of the "Iraqgate" database is to track the federal government's export program, and how those credits were used to purchase military arms.<sup>21</sup> The lack of documents made it necessary to rely on secondary sources to tell the story of the cabinet's role in the securitizing move. When applicable and available, primary documents were used.

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<sup>17</sup> DNAS collection: Iraqgate, United States, Department of State, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Secret, *NSC Deputies Committee Meeting on Iraq, May 29, 1990, White; House Situation Room, 4:30 p.m.*, May 26, 1990 <<https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1679129413/148580CC205D4767PQ/14?accountid=10141>>.

<sup>18</sup> IBID.

<sup>19</sup> DNAS collection: Iraqgate, United States, Department of State, Confidential, *Iraqi Letter to Arab League Threatening Kuwait*, July 19, 1990 <<https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1679130384/F138F59FFF214311PQ/39?accountid=10141>>.

<sup>20</sup> DNAS collection: Iraqgate.

<sup>21</sup> David Shaw, "Iraqgate – A Case Study of a Big Story With Little Impact," *LA Times*, October 27, 1992, <<http://www.latimes.com/food/la-me-shaw27oct27-story.html>>.

Consequently, this section will deviate from the research methods, laid out in the second chapter, and use Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor's book *The Generals' War* as the primary source to examine the role of the cabinet in the securitization process. However, the use of Gordon and Trainor's book cannot tell the full story because it was written only four years after The Gulf War, and therefore the book does not contain an assessment of recently declassified documents. Future scholars should visit the Bush library where you can find copies of all NSC meetings conducted during the build-up to the securitizing move.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned in the context section, the administration was unprepared for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. On July 25, 1990, the Joint Chiefs of Staff penned an Intelligence Information Report (IIR), which laid out Iraq's ambition in the Persian Gulf.<sup>23</sup> Most of the document remains excised, but from the few lines that can be read it is obvious that the administration underestimated Iraq's ambitions. In section 3 labeled, "Iraq's ambitions toward Kuwait" the Joint Chief assessed, "if Iraq did attack, it would be to gain a part and not to dominate Kuwait."<sup>24</sup> The next day, July 26, 1990, the Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) met and discussed the "Protection of U.S. Interests in the Persian Gulf."<sup>25</sup> Once again the Joint Chiefs seemed to be fixated on the idea that Iraq had no intentions to invade Kuwait. The main takeaway from the position paper were, the

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<sup>22</sup> George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, "NSC Meetings-George H.W. Bush Administration (1989-1993), June 27, 2013, <<https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/NSC%20Meetings%201989-1992--Declassified--2013-06-27--REVISED.pdf>>.

<sup>23</sup> DNAS collection: Iraqgate, United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Staff, classification excised, *IIR [Excised] Iraq's Ambition [Intelligence Information Report]*, July 25, 1990 <<https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1679141279/BAC46969FAEB411APQ/31?accountid=10141>>.

<sup>24</sup> *IBID.*

<sup>25</sup> DNAS collection: Iraqgate, United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy, Secret, *PCC [Policy Coordination Committee]; on Protection of U.S. Interests in the Persian Gulf*, July 26, 1990 <<https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1679140768/BAC46969FAEB411APQ/35?accountid=10141>>.

United States should not bash Iraq and Saddam Hussein did not want to confront the United States.<sup>26</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff, led by General Colin Powell, wrote both the report and the position paper. After Iraq invaded Kuwait, President Bush marginalized General Powell's voice in favor of more hawkish cabinet members, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft. There is no available evidence to correlate the marginalization of General Powell's recommendations with his pre-invasion assessment, however President Bush's decisions is a clear signal that General Powell did not have the ear of the President.

In addition to General Powell's incorrect assessment of Iraq's intention, the intelligence agency failed to alert the President of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Gordon and Trainor's book starts with Charlie Allen, the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) for warning.<sup>27</sup> According to Gordon and Trainor's account NIO Allen was aware and alert of the possibility of an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. However, NIO Allen's voice was lost in the fray, and the general consensus was the intelligence branch had failed.<sup>28</sup>

As hypothesized in Chapter 1 if an organization failed then there would be tremendous pressure on that organization to avoid future failure. Since governmental organizations are not punished for being risk-takers, organizations are incentivized to overestimate threats. An example of this hypothesis is the intelligence community's assessments after Iraq invaded Kuwait. After catching the majority of flak for its failure to inform the President about Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the intelligence community consistently overestimated and misstated Iraq's intentions. On August 23, 1990,

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<sup>26</sup> IBID.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 28-30, Cheney's Spokesman, Pete Williams, is quoted as saying "We had an intelligence community failure." P. 34.

CENTCOM's intelligence branch reported that Iraq had set up chemical decontamination equipment.<sup>29</sup> The equipment can only be used after a chemical weapon attack. Gordon and Trainor concluded that the threat was a false alarm, "It was the first of many intelligence reports that predicted, erroneously, that Iraq intended to use poison gas."<sup>30</sup> Additional intelligence reports misidentified Iraq's military intentions. According to Gordon and Trainor, the military relied on defectors to gather intelligence on Iraq's military plans, and the defectors relayed that Iraq had planned an offensive attack against Saudi Arabia.<sup>31</sup> Similar to the intelligence report on the possible use of chemical weapons, this report was false, however it "contributed mightily to [Gen.] Schwarzkopf's sense of apprehension."<sup>32</sup> After they failed to warn the President of Iraq's intention to invade Kuwait, the intelligence community became more active in the inflation of the Iraq threat.

As indicated in the introduction, a major theme prior to the deployment of troops was the strife between the civilian and military leadership. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with essential military personnel, met at the Pentagon and discussed policy options in response to Iraq's 'naked aggression.' Gordon and Trainor referred to the discussion that followed as 'battle lines' being drawn. The civilian side favored rolling back Iraqi aggression and the military personnel urged caution.<sup>33</sup> Gordon and Trainor attested that the meeting ended abruptly,

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<sup>29</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 64.

<sup>30</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 64-65.

<sup>31</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 65.

<sup>32</sup> IBID.

<sup>33</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 31.

when Secretary of Defense Cheney ordered “I want some options, General.”<sup>34</sup> The chain of command dictated that General Powell had to follow through with any order from Secretary Cheney, despite Cheney’s lack of military service. Therefore, General Powell’s voice had been mitigated on the institutional level.

The military suffered from a lack of plans related to the restoration of Kuwait’s sovereignty. Before the Iraq invaded Kuwait, the military conducted zero military war games or strategy sessions on the best practice to deter Iraqi aggression.<sup>35</sup> It became quite obvious that the military lacked prior knowledge of the issue when President Bush asked for potential offensive strategies. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, a group of presenters from CENTCOM presented the military’s offensive options.<sup>36</sup> By all standards the presentation was a failure, and was rejected by hawkish cabinet members, Dick Cheney and Brent Scowcroft. After the meeting, Secretary Cheney accused General Powell of slow play, which furthered the division between Cheney and Powell.<sup>37</sup> Forgoing other options, the White House asked CENTCOM to develop a plan with double the force size.<sup>38</sup>

Once the decision was made to deploy troops in an offensive manner, the cabinet played a significant role in the securitization process. The cabinet belittled the separation of powers and Congress’s ability to declare war. In two instances key cabinet members, James Baker and Dick Cheney, told Congress that the President had the authority to act offensively without Congressional consent. Secretary Baker met with both branches of

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<sup>34</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 34.

<sup>35</sup> Gordon and Trainor P. 125.

<sup>36</sup> Gordon and Trainor P. 139.

<sup>37</sup> Gordon and Trainor P. 141.

<sup>38</sup> Gordon and Trainor P. 139.

Congress on subsequent days, October 17 and 18.<sup>39</sup> These hearings were held before President Bush formally announced America's offensive intentions, but these hearings exposed the administrations disdain for Congress's Constitutional powers. During the House's Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing, on October 18, Congressman Theodore Weiss and Secretary Baker had a back and forth discussion of the President's legal authority to order an offensive strike. The back and forth is quintessential to understanding the President and the cabinet's mindset on the role of Congress as an actor during the Iraqi crisis.

Mr. Weiss: But it seems to me, Mr. Secretary, in fact you make a decision as the Executive Branch that you want to go to war in an offensively military fashion, that you ought to find that you have the support of the American people through their elected representatives. I don't understand why you have such little faith in the democratic process that you would say, well, "we will consult." The Constitution is quite clear. It is up to Congress to declare war.

Secretary BAKER. Mr. Weiss, is it war if we respond in what you would probably think is an appropriate way to the murder of some American civilians in Iraq?

Mr. Weiss. I was very careful in saying offensive military action on the part of the Administration, on the part of our government.

Secretary BAKER. The response in all probability would not be defensive.

Mr. WEISS. Even in that instance, it seems to me you would want to come to the Congress and have the Congress tell you, yes, this is such a serious violation, you ought to go to war. Wouldn't you want to do that?

Secretary BAKER. We expect to consult and we will consult. As I said in the other body yesterday, **I think it would be self-defeating if we came back, the Congress was called back to session**, take the example I just gave you, called back into session and we have **days of debate about whether and what we should or should not do**. Don't use this air wing, use this one over here or don't use that division, use this one over here (Emphasis added).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Congressional Quarterly

<sup>40</sup> Crisis in the Persian Gulf: Hearing Before *Committee on Foreign Affairs*, House, 101st Cong. (October 1990) (Questions from Congressman Weiss directed to Secretary of State James Baker).

In his last statement, Secretary Baker explicitly distorted Congress's proper role related to the war process. Congressman Weiss did not want to debate the military strategy or undermine the war plans, rather he wanted to vote on any offensive action, a Constitutional power granted to Congress. However, when Secretary Baker conflated the two ideas, he effectively announced that the President did not intend for Congress participation, because, Congress would burden the war process.

Following that back and forth, Congressman Weiss reminded Secretary Baker that even when American's were attacked after Pearl Harbor, President FDR asked Congress to declare war. Once again Secretary Baker rejected the notion that Congress was needed in the case of an offensive attack, and stated, "You [Congress] are not going to bless our action in advance."<sup>41</sup>

Secretary Cheney, who was more hawkish than Secretary Baker, reiterated that the President did not need official consent from Congress to launch an offensive attack against Iraq. In a back and forth conversation with Congressman Ron Dellums, Secretary Cheney pointed to previous Presidential actions and noted that the U.S. military had been involved in over 200 military conflicts but war had only been declared 5 times.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, Secretary Cheney compared an offensive action to the U.S. action in the 1950's when President Truman used a U.N. mandate to bypass Congress and declare war on North Korea.<sup>43</sup> This was a fair comparison and therefore powerful because precedent

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<sup>41</sup> IBID.

<sup>42</sup> Crisis on the Persian Gulf: Sanctions, Diplomacy and War: Hearing Before *Committee on Armed Services*, House, 101<sup>st</sup> Cong. (December 1990) (Questions from Congressman Dellums directed to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney).

<sup>43</sup> IBID.



dictated that Congressional authority was not required when the U.N. had consented to the use of force. The rhetoric used by the Bush cabinet was consistent in message and tone, the President did not need Congressional approval to launch an offensive attack against Iraq. The consistency of the message diminished Congress's ability to make a decision on U.S. strategy and led CQ Almanac to conclude, "much of the debate was a sense that the legislative branch had acted too late to have any real choice except to back Bush in his showdown with Iraq."<sup>44</sup> This sense of hopelessness was accomplished in three parts, the cabinet's actions after the securitization move, which was discussed above, the President's securitizing move, and Congress's role as an audience rather than an actor, a feature discussed later in this chapter.

### **The President**

President Bush is considered one of the most successful foreign policy president.<sup>45</sup> During his time in office President Bush deposed the Panama dictator Manuel Noriega, facilitated the fall of the USSR, and threw Iraq out of Kuwait. However, President Bush decisions were not always played within the boundaries of the Constitution. His decision to offensively deploy troops to Iraq, President Bush acquiesced approval from Congress through coercive rhetoric and measures. Furthermore, President Bush inflated the threat of Saddam Hussein, and constantly compared Hussein to Adolf Hitler. The image of Kuwait being Poland and Saddam being Hitler was an effective tool

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<sup>44</sup> Congressional Quarterly

<sup>45</sup> James M. Lindsay, "Who Were the Most and Least Successful Foreign Policy Presidents?" *Council of Foreign Relations*, September 21, 2012 <<https://www.cfr.org/blog/who-were-most-and-least-successful-foreign-policy-presidents>>.

that primed the American people for war.<sup>46</sup> The following section will explore, how President Bush became the primary securitizing actor, his rhetoric, and the strategy used to coerce Congress.

The cabinet section discussed, the executive branch's lack of preparation for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. After Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, President Bush addressed the media and strongly condemned Iraq's action but did not offer a policy option nor a strategy the United States would take to reverse the acts of aggression.<sup>47</sup> Later that day, President Bush signed an executive order that froze Iraqi assets and prohibited any future transactions between U.S. entities and Iraq.<sup>48</sup> At this time President Bush did not plan to use the United States military.<sup>49</sup> During the early days of the Iraq invasion of Kuwait, the President treaded water because a formal policy decision had not yet been made. However, the lukewarm response soon became hawkish as the United States deployed of 100,000 troops to Saudi Arabia.

The United Kingdom's Prime Minister, Margret Thatcher, significantly influenced President Bush's decision to deploy troops to Saudi Arabia.<sup>50</sup> The pair met at the Aspen conference on August 3. At the meeting, Prime Minister Thatcher used an analogy that became a common line used by President Bush, the Iraq invasion was

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<sup>46</sup> Scott MacDonald, "Hitler's Shadow: Historical Analogies and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 13, No. 4 (December 2002): p. 29-30.

<sup>47</sup> 41, George H. Bush, "Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, August 2, 1990," *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush*, 1990, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18726&st=Iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>48</sup> 41, George H. Bush, "Executive Order 12722-Blocking Iraqi Government Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Iraq, August 2, 1990," *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush*, 1990, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=19019&st=iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>49</sup> IBID.

<sup>50</sup> Margret Thatcher influence is documented in multiple books from this time including Jean Edward Smith *George Bush's War* and Gordon and Trainor's book *The Generals' War*.

similar to the 1930's German aggression in Europe.<sup>51</sup> President Bush's press conference with Margret Thatcher was the first time President Bush uttered the phrase "naked aggression" and promised that "Iraq's aggression would not stand."<sup>52</sup> Just hours before the press conference, President Bush told the press that he had not considered intervention in Kuwait. Therefore, a link can be made between President Bush's statement and Margret Thatcher's influence. However, some historical books oversell the role of Prime Minister Thatcher's influence and thus undermine President Bush's role as the final arbitrator in America's decision to deploy troops to Saudi Arabia.<sup>53</sup> With hindsight and declassified documents the truth falls somewhere in the middle. President Bush did tell the press that America was not considering intervention in Kuwait, but that statement was likely influenced by the lack of concrete policy options given the surprise of the Iraq invasion. The cabinet section mentioned the debate on August 2, where the cabinet was divided on policy options and the deployment of military was an option favored by Secretary of Defense Cheney. In historical and political context, the meeting with Margret Thatcher did not imbalance the scales, between diplomacy and forward deployment, rather it was a reconfirmation of President Bush's preferred policy decision.<sup>54</sup>

After the Aspen conference, President Bush decided that America's policy should be rooted in the rollback of Iraqi aggression in Kuwait.<sup>55</sup> The decision to send troops to Saudi Arabia was made solely by President Bush and took some of his cabinet members

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<sup>51</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 36.

<sup>52</sup> George H. Bush, Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom, August 6, 1990  
<<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18747&st=Iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>53</sup> Jean Edward Smith, *George Bush's War* (New York: Henry, Holt & Company, 1992) P. 7

<sup>54</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 36.

<sup>55</sup> Gordon and Trainor, P. 49.

by surprise. After President Bush's press conference on August 5, the spokeswoman for Secretary of State Baker said, "What's got into him?"<sup>56</sup> While President Bush's tough rhetoric on Iraq was a change in U.S. foreign policy and the subsequent deployment of troops significantly deviated from the norm it did not act as the securitization move. All of President Bush's interactions with the media and available declassified documents dismisses the idea that the original decision to deploy troops was anything more than a strictly defensive deployment. In his address to the nation on August 8, President Bush laid out the four guiding principles, which were consistent with NSD 26. The four guiding principles were: Complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the restoration of the Kuwaiti government, a stable Persian Gulf, and the protection of Americans abroad.<sup>57</sup> During the address to the nation, President Bush claimed that Saddam Hussein was the modern day Hitler and therefore the United States would not sit by as Saddam displayed naked aggression against a sovereign nation.<sup>58</sup> To develop the context for the future offensive aggression, the President inflated the threat of Saddam Hussein.

Chapter two discusses the speech act and its relation to context of the securitization move. A speech act relies on a linguistic reservoir, which Holger Stritzel defines as, "set of analogies, similes, and contrasts that help an actor frame the securitization issue at hand."<sup>59</sup> President Bush decision to compare Saddam Hussein to Hitler is consistent with past security actor's use of the speech act. Similar to President

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<sup>56</sup> IBID.

<sup>57</sup> 41, George H. Bush, "Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia, August 8, 1990" *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush*, 1990, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18750&st=Iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>58</sup> IBID.

<sup>59</sup> Holger Stritzel, "Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 3 (2007) P. 369.

Wilson's speech acted, which primed the American people to accept the United States role in the First World War, President Bush began to prime Congress for war with Iraq. The effectiveness of this comparison is documented by securitization scholars and international relations scholars alike.<sup>60</sup> As the President decision making progressed he continued the comparison between Saddam and Hitler. When the President announced his decision to offensively deploy troops the image in the audience's head was one of Hitler and 1930's Europe.

On October 12, 1990, President Bush did not announce his intentions for a military offensive action, because an announcement would have sparked a debate among the American people, who were headed to the ballot box for the midterm elections. The midterms were not a referendum on U.S. grand strategy in the Persian Gulf, and the inaction from President Bush, since the first deployment of troops alluded to a strategy, which relied on comprehensive international sanctions.<sup>61</sup> Between the October 11 meeting and President Bush's announcement to offensively deploy troops, on November 8, 1990, the President was only questioned about the Persian Gulf five times.<sup>62</sup> On October 29, 1990, President Bush was asked how he felt about Senator Cohen's statement that the President needed congressional approval to commit offensive troops in the Middle East. President Bush responded, "History is replete with examples where the President has had to take action. And I've done this in the past and certainly -- somebody

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<sup>60</sup> Benjamin R. Bates, "Audiences, Metaphors, and the Persian Gulf War," *Communication Studies* 55, no. 3 (2004) P. 449 & Scot MacDonald P. 30.

<sup>61</sup> Congressional Quarterly

<sup>62</sup>Presidential Public Papers <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php>>.

mentioned provocation -- would have no hesitancy at all.”<sup>63</sup> This language strongly resembled the language used by the cabinet after the deployment of offensive troops. The following week President Bush used rhetoric, which threatened offensive operations against the Iraqi government if they impeded the United States efforts to resupply the embassy in Kuwait.<sup>64</sup> The Iraqi treatment of U.S. personnel was used as justification for the deployment of offensive troops, even though some media members questioned the President’s claims.<sup>65</sup> On November 1, 1990, President Bush held a news conference and the majority of questions asked dealt with the President’s new found aggression toward Iraq. Many of the questions asked if the President was preparing the American people for war with Iraq, to which President Bush responded that he preferred the diplomatic option.<sup>66</sup> However, President Bush did not deny that he was considering a military option. As rumors swirled, very little happened between November 1, and November 8, the date the President announced the deployment of offensive troops.

CQ Almanac described President Bush’s announcement on November 8, as a “post-election surprise.”<sup>67</sup> However, the President privately planned his securitization move for the better part of a month and the continued comparison between Saddam and Hitler gave the President the context needed to make the announcement. President Bush

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<sup>63</sup> 41, George H. Bush, “Exchange With Reporters in San Francisco, California, October 29, 1990” *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush*, 1990, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18973&st=Iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Cohen, “Saving Face – and Lives,” *The Washington Post*, November 1, 1990 <[https://advance-lexis-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crd=b5f58b4e-163e-4308-b94b-4ec77a71070b&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9PT0-002S-T203-00000-00&pddocid=urn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9PT0-002S-T203-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=8075&pdteaserkey=sr9&pdtab=allpods&comp=Ly\\_k&earg=sr9&prid=79c41f07-0b44-4ab1-9797-0c09b9cfc3d3>](https://advance-lexis-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crd=b5f58b4e-163e-4308-b94b-4ec77a71070b&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9PT0-002S-T203-00000-00&pddocid=urn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9PT0-002S-T203-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=8075&pdteaserkey=sr9&pdtab=allpods&comp=Ly_k&earg=sr9&prid=79c41f07-0b44-4ab1-9797-0c09b9cfc3d3>).

<sup>65</sup> IBID.

<sup>66</sup> 41, George H. Bush, “The President’s News Conference in Orlando, Florida, November 1, 1990,” *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush*, 1990, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18984&st=Iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>67</sup> Congressional Quarterly

tried to frame the shift in posture as a signal of strength.<sup>68</sup> However, President Bush pre-decided that force would be needed to accomplish the goals he set out on August 8, 1990. Therefore, this public announcement acts as the securitization moment because the President officially announced a change in U.S. policy from defensive to offensive. This move needed consent from a co-equal actor, in this case the United States Congress. Gaining Congressional consent was set to be a political battle, and therefore to better his odds the President began a campaign to undermine Congress's role as an actor.

The President relied on two tools to undermine Congress's constitutional authority, a U.N. mandate and his cabinet. The latter was discussed in the cabinet section, therefore this section will take up the former. On November 29, 1990, the United Nations Security Council agreed to Resolution 678, by a 12-2 vote.<sup>69</sup> Resolution 678 granted the international community the right to use force to rid Kuwait of Iraq, if Iraq failed to voluntarily remove troops by January 15.<sup>70</sup> CQ Almanac noted, the administration worked on this resolution for over six weeks, which coincided with the week after the October 12 military meeting.<sup>71</sup> President Bush knew a congressional debate would be contentious and the effort to secure a majority could be futile, so he pursued a U.N. mandate that acted as an insurance policy for his preferred policy. The U.N. resolution put a hard deadline on Congress to make a decision. House Majority Leader Gephardt disapproved of the

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<sup>68</sup> 41, George H. Bush, "The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis, November 8, 1990," *In Public Papers of the President of the United States George H. Bush*, 1990, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=19019&st=iraq&st1=>>.

<sup>69</sup> Security Council Resolution 678, S/RES/678 (November 29, 1990) <<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/678>>.

<sup>70</sup> IBID.

<sup>71</sup> Congressional Quarterly

President's methods and stated, "The countries that are voting today are not the countries that are going to have their young people dying."<sup>72</sup>

As time ticked down and President Bush's cabinet testified that congressional approval was not needed for an offensive operation, Congress was stuck in between a rock and a hard place. President Bush had played a game of risk, and set up his chess board without going through the proper channels. Once the board was set Congress had to play the pieces as they stood. Congress's decision making will be discussed in the next section, but it is important to explore the catch 22 Congress was in. On one hand Congress could have held a vote before the President formally asked for an authorization to use force. If that was the route Congress took then the President could have passed the burden of the war onto Congress and claimed that Congress jumped the gun on the diplomatic option. However, if they did nothing the Bush administration had been transparent, the President did not need a Congressional mandate to launch an offensive operation. Not only did President Bush set the chess board how he liked but then he also dictated to Congress that if they moved they lost and if they did nothing they lost. According to CQ, the letter President Bush sent to Congress avoided the question of congressional power and was a mere formality, rather than a legal request.<sup>73</sup> The President as the securitizing actor had coerced Congress to support his preferred policy.

## **Congress**

The previous two sections highlighted the administration's strategy used to coerce congress. As noted in the introduction, individual members of Congress pushed for sanctions against the Iraq regime as early as 1989. However, sanctions a country against

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<sup>72</sup> IBID.

<sup>73</sup> IBID.



chemical weapons use is different than a vote to send American's to die for a questionable national interest. Congress's role as an actor was mitigated by the cabinet, the President, and the institution of Congress.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait, Congress was out of session.<sup>74</sup> Traditionally Congress does not meet in Washington D.C. during the month of August, rather they conduct official business in their home districts/states. Therefore, when Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, Congress was on recess and did not reconvene until the first week of September. This long gap of time, in addition to the President's Constitutional authority as commander in chief, gave the President authority to make decisions on troop deployment. Even if Congress was in session, the President under the War Powers Resolution had the power to deploy troops for up to 60 days without Congressional approval.<sup>75</sup> These circumstances led most members of Congress to praise President Bush's decision to deploy troops as a deterrent against potential future aggression from Iraq.<sup>76</sup>

As Congress reconvened and the 60 day deadline neared a debate started to brew on Congress's role related to the War Powers Resolution. Legally, Congress needed to approve of President Bush's deployment of troops or President Bush would have been forced to remove the 100,000+ troops that were stationed in Saudi Arabia. However, President Bush did not believe the War Powers Resolution was constitutional and therefore was not obligated to ask Congress for an extension or continued funding for the troops in Saudi Arabia. Similar to the catch 22 Congress faced later, Congress could

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<sup>74</sup> IBID.

<sup>75</sup> H.J. Res. 542, 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress, "War Powers Resolution," November 7, 1973  
<<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/93/hjres542>>.

<sup>76</sup> Congressional Quarterly

defund the deployment of troops and undermine the U.S. strategic deterrence in the Persian Gulf or they could acquiesce their Constitutional authority to the President and fully fund the President's initiative. Congress chose the latter, and passed a resolution that supported the actions taken up to that enactment of the resolution, but did not grant the President Constitutional authority to act in an offensive manner. The last point is important because the debate about the resolution's intent tried to avoid a Gulf of Tonkin situation.<sup>77</sup>

Individual members were once again away from chambers when the President announced that America would shift its posture from defensive to offensive. Congressional members were in their district for the midterm election when on November 8, President Bush announced that he was doubling the number of troops in the Persian Gulf and the mission of the newly deployed troops included an offensive component. After some members proposed a special session, which was rejected, Congress settled for on hearings.<sup>78</sup> As Congress returned to session, the President had received a U.N. mandate via UNSCR 678. As Senator Kennedy noted, the doubling of troops was the writing on the wall that America was headed to war with Iraq.<sup>79</sup>

Congress now faced the question, was it possible to have an unbiased debate about the proper role of American power, when the President had an U.N. mandate and had previously claimed that Congress was not needed in making the final decision. During this time, the Washington Post op-ed page demanded that Congress vote on the offensive deployment of troops. However, as Ted Koppel noted in his op-ed "Congress

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<sup>77</sup> IBID.

<sup>78</sup> IBID.

<sup>79</sup> IBID.

Should Debate Now,” with America being on the road to war the super-charged setting did not allow for a neutral debate to take place.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the framing from the White House and the media – more on the media in the next section – framed the debate as a democracy versus a thuggish, evil regime.<sup>81</sup> Finally, Congress had been previously ridiculed by the administration and the media for its failure to vote on the War Powers Resolution. On November 22, 1990, Jim Hoagland in his op-ed “Congress, Bush and the Generals” pointed to Congress’s refusal to vote on the War Powers Resolution. To Hoagland this represented Congress’s lack of resolve on the Iraq issue.<sup>82</sup>

Even with being constrained, Congress managed to hold hearings in both chambers on the pros and cons of America’s decision to go to war. However, when Congress held meetings with cabinet leaders the message was a clear and consistent, the President did not need Congressional authority to launch an offensive operation against Iraq. To counteract this message a handful of Congressional members sued the President and asked a federal judge for a ruling on the President’s Constitutional power to launch an offensive operation without Congressional approval.<sup>83</sup> This action represented Congress’s attempt to claim a role as an actor. Unfortunately the action backfired as the

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<sup>80</sup> Ted Koppel, “Congress Should Debate Now,” *The Washington Post*, November 14, 1990  
 <[https://advance-lexis-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crid=beacd312-babb-4b65-bb41-9a6d417ba112&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9MN0-002S-T4FT-00000-00&pddocid=urn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9MN0-002S-T4FT-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=8075&pdteaserkey=sr0&pdtab=allpods&ecomp=Ly\\_k&earg=sr0&prid=68dee58-b64c-4544-9d40-4224a57ccd99](https://advance-lexis-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crid=beacd312-babb-4b65-bb41-9a6d417ba112&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9MN0-002S-T4FT-00000-00&pddocid=urn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9MN0-002S-T4FT-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=8075&pdteaserkey=sr0&pdtab=allpods&ecomp=Ly_k&earg=sr0&prid=68dee58-b64c-4544-9d40-4224a57ccd99)>.

<sup>81</sup> See: Scot McDonald

<sup>82</sup> Jim Hoagland, “Congress, Bush and the Generals,” *The Washington Post*, November 22, 1990  
 <[https://advance-lexis-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crid=6e21bf16-75c2-4c2d-8a08-0c385f12cd35&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9K70-002S-T2P2-00000-00&pddocid=urn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9K70-002S-T2P2-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=8075&pdteaserkey=sr6&pdtab=allpods&ecomp=Ly\\_k&earg=sr6&prid=7a5e7c3f-d3e2-412d-9f82-f37588f4ae55](https://advance-lexis-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crid=6e21bf16-75c2-4c2d-8a08-0c385f12cd35&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9K70-002S-T2P2-00000-00&pddocid=urn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-9K70-002S-T2P2-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=8075&pdteaserkey=sr6&pdtab=allpods&ecomp=Ly_k&earg=sr6&prid=7a5e7c3f-d3e2-412d-9f82-f37588f4ae55)>.

<sup>83</sup> Congressional Quarterly

judge ruled that it was up the majority of Congress to decide if the President had the authorization to launch a war without their approval. The judge kicked the can back to Congress and failed to answer the underlying question, could the President subvert Congress's role as an actor on issues concerning war?<sup>84</sup>

As the sand ran out of the hour glass and hearings commenced, Congress considered multiple policy issues. With the President ready to go to war, Congress needed to contemplate the effectiveness of sanctions, how long an anti-Iraq coalition could be held together, and how America would deem success if war was conducted. During these hearings Congress did its due diligence as they hosted intellectual diverse panels who offered a comprehensive analysis on the Iraq question.<sup>85</sup> The hearings elucidated the administration's preferred policy and Democrats who preferred economic sanctions, made clear the decision to go to war was the Presidents'. During a hearing Senator Sarbanes stated, "We've abandoned that [sanction] policy, and we've shifted off to a course now which I think is going to take us into conflict."<sup>86</sup> Additionally, Senator Nunn, the chair of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, questioned Secretary Cheney's resolve for sanctions. "If we have a war, we're never going to know whether they [sanctions] would work, are we? That's the point."<sup>87</sup> Ted Koppel's assessment was correct, a neutral debate held within the halls of Congress was not attainable and the sand had almost reached the bottom of the hour glass.

As the January 15, 1991, deadline approached Congress at the encouragement of the President, voted on the authorization of force. At this time 400,000 U.S. troops were

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<sup>84</sup> IBID.

<sup>85</sup> IBID.

<sup>86</sup> IBID.

<sup>87</sup> IBID.

stationed in Saudi Arabia and they were joined by 600,000 international coalition forces.<sup>88</sup> Congress took up the issue on January 8, 1991, and debated the decision for four days. On the fourth day of debate the Senate passed S J Resolution 2 and the House passed H J Resolution 77 which granted the President the right to use force.<sup>89</sup> Congress upheld its Constitutional authority, but the vote was undermined by the parameters set by the President. Congress, who constitutionally should play an equal role in the securitizing move, was downgraded to an audience role. Additionally, Congress was restricted as an audience because of the parameters set by the actor, and therefore could not assent or dissent to the actors securitizing move, but rather were coerced into accepting the preferred policy of the President.

### **The Media**

As the President reacted to the events as they unfolded, the media was a medium for intellectuals to write about the need for a more aggressive foreign policy. The media relied on common tropes, Saddam as Hitler and the 1990's Middle East as 1930's Europe that created a context, which the President used to take a hardline against Iraq. However, a couple voices in the Washington Post, Richard Cohen and Milton Viorst, were critical of President Bush's strategy in the Persian Gulf. To understand the role of the media during this securitization move. Two time periods are examined, the deployment of troops to Saudi Arabia and the President's decision to shift to an offensive posture. For the latter examination this section will exclude the New York Times. During this time

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<sup>88</sup> IBID.

<sup>89</sup> S.J. Res. 2, 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress, "Authorization for use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution," January 12, 1991 <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/senate-joint-resolution/2>>; H.J. Res. 77, 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress, "Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution," January 14, 1991 <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/house-joint-resolution/77>>.

period the New York Times op-eds are pro-Bush, and therefore the analysis for the first section can be applied to the second section.

### **New York Times**

An analysis of eight New York Times op-eds from August 3, 1990, to August 13, 1990, found that the New York Times was unequivocally supportive of President Bush's Iraq policy. All eight articles selected are by the New York Times editorial board, which might explain the bias toward President Bush. As chapter 4 will show, the New York Times op-ed page was restrictive during this time period which led to op-eds of similar content and political alignment.

On August 3, 9, 10, and 13 the New York Times applauded President Bush for decisions related to Iraq. On August 3, the op-ed is titled "Iraq's Naked Aggression" and was written after President Bush's press conference with Margaret Thatcher.<sup>90</sup> Not only does the op-ed use President Bush's language it also affirmed that President Bush took the first step to counter Iraqi aggression. President Bush did not take any policy steps that countered Iraqi aggression on August 3. Despite the lack of policy, President Bush received good marks from the New York Times editorial board. The August 9, article "The U.S. stands Up. Who Else?" stated, "On balance President Bush has made the right choice in the right way."<sup>91</sup> Likewise, on August 13, in an article titled "Autocracy and Democracy in the Sand" the article stated, "Americans are on the right side of this quarrel

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<sup>90</sup> New York Times Editorial, "Iraq's Naked Aggression," *New York Times*, August 3, 1990  
<<https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/docview/108510348/fulltextPDF/C587634A2A834C5EPQ/1?accountid=10141>>.

<sup>91</sup> New York Times Editorial, "The U.S. Stands Up. Who Else?" *New York Times*, August 9, 1990  
<<https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/docview/108508952?accountid=10141>>.

and of history.”<sup>92</sup> These selections read more like a Presidential press release than a serious analysis of the issue at hand. The New York Times was an essential element in the construction of context for President Bush.

In his book, *George Bush's War*, Jean Edward Smith accused the New York Times and Washington Post of inflating the Iraq threat. Smith claimed that the “Administration began a concerted press campaign to emphasize the danger posed to Saudi Arabia by Saddam. Both The New York Times and the Washington Post, carried front-page stories on Saturday, August 4, that Iraqi forces were massing at the frontier, ready to invade.”<sup>93</sup> Whether the administration used the media to push their narrative falls outside the scope of this thesis but it is important to note that the interaction between the media and the President is not a one way street and the media can be manipulated to push the President’s preferred policy option. I mention this here because the New York Times op-ed used similar language to the White House and helped to create a positive context for the administration actions.

### **Washington Post**

The Washington Post op-ed page was particularly active during the two mentioned time periods. With the level of activity being much higher than the New York Times, I had to randomly select op-eds, therefore all op-eds during this time were not selected. In randomly selecting op-eds I tried to avoid confirmation and selection bias. Similar to the New York Times, the Washington Post supported and pushed the President’s agenda during the build up to Operation Desert Shield. After the November 8,

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<sup>92</sup> New York Times Editorial, “Autocracy and Democracy in the Sand,” *New York Times*, August 13, 1990 <<https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/docview/108518734?accountid=10141>>.

<sup>93</sup> Jean Edward Smith, P. 79.

securitization move, the Washington Post began a pressure campaign that targeted Congress. The framing and the tone of the op-eds during this time are closely related to the cabinet's message. The following section will examine sixteen op-eds between August 3, and August 23, and twelve op-eds between November 1, and November 22.

Charles Krauthammer wrote the first op-ed analyzed and it was published on August 3.<sup>94</sup> The content of the article is relevant to the topic at hand, however the bigger impact of this op-ed was the framing of the Iraq invasion of Kuwait. Krauthammer argued that the United States was justified in supporting Iraq over Iran during the 1980 war, because in Krauthammer words "remember we [the U.S.] supported Stalin over Hitler."<sup>95</sup> However, after the Iran-Iraq war concluded Krauthammer claimed the United States failed to deter Iraq, which led to Iraqi aggression in the region. Krauthammer concluded with an analogy that would become popular with the administration, the Arab world faced a situation similar to Europe in the 1930's.<sup>96</sup> Krauthammer's used the linguistic reservoir, to play upon people's fear of Hitler and another World War. This framing gave President Bush's use of the analogy credibility. As more people stated the similarities between the two situations it hardened the credibility of the statement and the comparison with the American people and Congress.

Similar to Krauthammer's op-ed, George Will wrote an op-ed on August 3, titled "Wolf Out of Babylon."<sup>97</sup> George Will argued that the comparison between Hussein and

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<sup>94</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "A Festival of Appeasement," *The Washington Post*, August 3, 1990  
<<https://advance.lexis.com/document?crd=7a0eb03e-7c8f-4c1b-8813-cc54d7a607e8&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-B770-002S-T55H-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=8075&pdmfid=1516831&pdisurlapi=true>>.

<sup>95</sup> IBID.

<sup>96</sup> IBID.

<sup>97</sup> George F. Will, "Wolf out of Babylon," *The Washington Post*, August 3, 1990  
<<https://advance.lexis.com/document?crd=e88ad229-1155-4cc7-a449->



Mussolini was misguided because Hussein was a much more vicious and evil when compared to Mussolini.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, George Will invoked Munich and stated the lesson learned from World War II was: “when it is necessary to confront an expansionist dictator, sooner is better than later.”<sup>99</sup> In the first couple days after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, the Washington Post op-ed pages created a context that the world faced World War III. Furthermore, the United States must confront Saddam to avoid the mistakes made during the 1930’s. This comparison granted the administration a moral high ground, if a decision needed to be made then the audience would have to side with President Bush or Hitler.

As the shock and awe of Operation Desert Storm wore off, the Washington Post op-ed section discussed President Bush’s next step. Op-ed writers took one of two sides; the United States must be the aggressor and rid the world of Saddam or the United States should be cautious and avoid escalation. Those in favor of the former policy option were David Broder, Jim Hoagland and Irving Kristol.<sup>100</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, Sharif S. Elmusa, and Paul H. Nitze argued in favor of the latter.<sup>101</sup> During the build up to the securitization move, the intellectual diversity displayed by the Washington Post op-eds should be considered the gold standard. The previous analysis of the New York Times

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77acc050fc52&pdcontentfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A3SJF-B770-002S-T55M-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=8075&pdmfid=1516831&pdurlapi=true>.

<sup>98</sup> IBID.

<sup>99</sup> IBID.

<sup>100</sup> David S. Broder, “Reactive President,” *The Washington Post*, August 19, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/8gSw3c>>; Jim Hoagland, “Saddam’s Last Fantasy,” *The Washington Post*, August 21, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/samzXK>>; Irving Kristol, “The Gulf: Born-Again Isolationists...” *The Washington Post*, August 22, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/ReAkdW>>.

<sup>101</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, “The True U.S. Interest in the Gulf,” *The Washington Post*, August 16, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/zmo4hd>>; Shari S. Elmusa, “Take Saddam Seriously,” *The Washington Post*, August 23, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/xk4tUy>>; Paul H. Nitze, “Getting the Good of This Crisis; Let’s use it to improve superpower collaboration,” *The Washington Post*, August 26, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/dtZNMu>>.

and Washington Post have shown a bias toward the securitization actor's preference and both papers subsequently engaged in the securitization move as facilitating actor. However, this debate between the two camps can be used as an example of the media attempt to be a neutral arbitrator of policy.

A constant theme in the lead up to President Bush's securitizing move, on November 8, was that he had mismanaged the Iraq issue up to that point. On November 1, and November 7, the Washington Post ran op-eds that questioned President Bush's decision making and his public campaign, which attempted to win domestic support for war.<sup>102</sup> Richard Cohen's article, "Saving Face and Lives" was critical of the Bush administration's rhetorical build up to war. Cohen did not disagree with President Bush, as they both agreed that there was sufficient reasons for war with Iraq. Rather he disagreed with President Bush's methods of threat inflation. Furthermore, Cohen advocated for President Bush to tell the truth to the American people if war became a necessary tool.<sup>103</sup> In the same light George Will's article "Did You Ever See a Policy Go This Way and That?" questioned the administrations inconsistent rhetoric.<sup>104</sup> Noted in the article, is President Bush argument that the embargo was working but that the embargo was not enough to expel Saddam from Kuwait.<sup>105</sup> The source of the inconsistent message was President Bush's private intentions, which he would announce the following day, and the current stated policy that the United States had adopted. However, the criticism of

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<sup>102</sup> Richard Cohen; and George F. Will, "Did you Ever See a Policy Go This Way and That," *The Washington Post*, November 7, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/QiQhWJ>>.

<sup>103</sup> Richard Cohen

<sup>104</sup> George F. Will

<sup>105</sup> IBID.

President Bush dissipated after he announced the United States shift in posture within the Persian Gulf.

After President Bush's announcement on November 8, the Washington Post editorial board ran two op-eds that called upon Congress to debate the issue of offensive deployment. On November 11, and November 14, the Washington Post applauded President Bush for his action and then deemed that it was Congress's responsibility to vote up or down on President Bush's policy.<sup>106</sup> However, as mentioned in the previous section Congress faced skewed parameters that restricted the means for a fair and neutral debate. Ted Koppel stated as much in his op-ed "Congress Should Debate Now" on November 14.<sup>107</sup> With Congress being out of session and not set to reconvene until after the Thanksgiving holiday, the call for immediate debate fell on deaf ears.

When it came to Congressional debate, many writers assessed Congress as the audience in the securitizing move. Both, Charles Krauthammer and Jim Hoagland implicitly acknowledged that Congress was being coerced.<sup>108</sup> In "The Case for Reconvening Congress" Krauthammer referred to the doubling of troops as a "use it or lose it deployment."<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, Krauthammer stated that President Bush's statement was an executive deceleration of war and Congress must vote, on the approval of the President's policy.<sup>110</sup> Similar to Krauthammer, Jim Hoagland claimed that President Bush had to take his message directly to the public because Congress viewed President Bush,

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<sup>106</sup> Washington Post Editorial Board, "The Gulf Buildup," *The Washington Post*, November 11, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/ckAADm>>; Washington Post Editorial Board, "Calling Back Congress," *The Washington Post*, November 14, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/HHuAcH>>.

<sup>107</sup> Ted Koppel

<sup>108</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "An Executive Declaration of War; The case for reconvening Congress," *The Washington Post*, November 16, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/Nc2aYR>>; Jim Hoagland

<sup>109</sup> Charles Krauthammer

<sup>110</sup> IBID.

and not Saddam Hussein, as the enemy.<sup>111</sup> This rhetoric is consistent with the President's action that war had been declared by the executive and Congress only had one option, vote yes.

Besides a few dissenting opinions the Washington Post and the New York Times op-ed pages built context and supported the securitization move. Furthermore, after the securitizing move only one Washington Post op-ed was critical of the President's policy and called for a serious discussion of the implications of the preferred policy.<sup>112</sup> In addition to the cabinet and Presidential action, the press belittled the institutional role of Congress.

### **The American Public**

The American public was receptive and reacted in a positive manner when President Bush announced that he intended to send troops to Saudi Arabia. President Bush enjoyed a 27% increase in approval for his Iraq policy after he made the public announcement. However, as the weeks wore on the public's support for President Bush's policy began to fade. For six weeks, starting on August 9, a day after President Bush announced he was deploying troops to the Persian Gulf, and ending on September 30, President Bush Iraq policy approval rating averaged 75.5%.<sup>113</sup> The following five weeks, starting on October 3, and ending on November 4, President Bush average approval rating fell to 63.4%.<sup>114</sup> The significant decrease in President Bush's policy popularity might lead to an inference that the American people's opinion forced President Bush to

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<sup>111</sup> Jim Hoagland

<sup>112</sup> Milton Viorst, "War and Consequences," *The Washington Post*, November 13, 1990 <<https://goo.gl/ujrPyW>>.

<sup>113</sup> Average taken from Gallup Poll <<https://goo.gl/8kFe1d>>.

<sup>114</sup> IBID.

consider a new policy initiative. However, as shown in the previous sections, President Bush had already considered a military option before the poll numbers declined. Therefore, the public opinion played little to no role in the securitization move.

After the securitization move President Bush failed to recapture the strong support his initial deployment enjoyed. Between November 8, and January 13, 1991, President Bush's Iraq approval rating decreased to 59%.<sup>115</sup> However, the decrease in approval rating did not correlate to a change in policy. Since the policy remained the same despite the unpopularity of the preferred policy, a reasonable conclusion can be made that the American people were not the intended audience. This conclusion aligns with the content of this chapter, as it became increasingly clear that the President's choice for an audience was Congress. The big takeaway from this section is that the American people did not have to take on an audience role in order for the securitization move to be successful.

## **Conclusion**

The United States policy of defense and deterrence in the Middle East gave way to offensive operations, which intended to punish past and future aggressors. To effectively accomplish a shift in posture, President Bush securitized the Iraq issue on November 8, 1990, when he announced the deployment of troops for offensive purposes. President Bush lacked the authority to unilaterally make this securitizing move, and needed support from Congress. Congress is traditionally thought as an intended audience of a securitizing move, but the Constitution grants them equal authority to be an actor when the issue of war is being considered. However, Congress's feelings about war in the Persian Gulf were not in line with the President's. To coerce Congress, President Bush

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<sup>115</sup> IBID.

tasked his cabinet with a direct messages; Congressional authority for an offensive operation was not needed, but the administration expected a yes vote if the President asked for Congressional authorization. As this process happened cabinet members shifted from advisors to facilitating securitizing actor whose goal was to get an audiences approval.

Before the securitizing move, the media maintained a role as context builders who advocated for the President to do more. After the securitizing move, op-ed pages reflected the cabinet's rhetoric. During this time the Washington Post and New York Times pages were strongly biased toward the President and in some instances undercut the role of Congress. The media replicated the, us versus them rhetoric of the President and passed the responsibility of the forward deployed troops onto Congress. The first Gulf War created the context that Iraq was a threat to U.S. national security, and that context would heavily influence the Clinton administration.



## **Chapter 4 Clinton Administration**

The Gulf War's limited nature left Iraq's President Saddam Hussein in power. Additionally, the Gulf War failed to send troops into Iraq, therefore Saddam Hussein retained a large stockpile of chemical and biological weapons. The Security Council in 1991, passed UNSCR 687 that created an international inspection team who was tasked to eliminate Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) stockpile. The international community believed that Iraq's WMD's represented an existential threat. Therefore, Iraq's WMD's were securitized in 1991 and continued to be securitized until the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Since the issue of WMD's were securitized before the Clinton administration, the chapter will focus on another issue, the Iraq Liberation Act (ILA). The Iraq Liberation Act, signed into law on October 31, 1998, was a securitization move that altered the President's Iraq policy. Congress agreed with the President, the WMD threat was an existential threat. However, Congress did not believe that the WMD issue could be handled until Saddam Hussein was removed from his official position in Iraq. While President Clinton struggled to hold together an international sanction regime, Congress held hearings on the possibility of regime change in Iraq. Led by Congressman Gillibrand, Congress passed the Iraq Liberation Act, which changed the United States policy toward Iraq from containment to regime change.

The passage of the Iraq Liberation Act emboldened President Clinton's policy toward Iraq. After Operation Desert Fox, the three day bombing campaign that targeted Iraq's WMD sites, President Clinton embraced the idea of regime change. President



Clinton's shift in preferred policy was directly related to the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act, and therefore the securitization move can be deemed a success. The following sections will give a detailed look into the process of the securitizing move.

## **Context**

The Clinton administration continued the policy of containment in regards to Iraq. The continuation of containment necessitated the Clinton administration uphold multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR). The resolutions vital to the context are UNSCR 687, UNSCR 707, UNSCR 1134, and UNSCR 1137.

UNSCR 687 was issued in 1991 after U.S. forces liberated Kuwait from the Iraqi military.<sup>1</sup> Operative clause 8 of UNSCR 687 reads, "Iraq shall unconditionally accept the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless under international supervision, of: all chemical and biological weapons and all stocks of agents and all related subsystems."<sup>2</sup> The following clause, operative clause 9, decided the implementation method for operative clause 8.<sup>3</sup> Iraq was required to submit a letter to the Secretary-General that contained the name of all sites in which the material listed in operative clause 8 was located, and additionally Iraq had to allow international inspectors to enter their country to verify sites.

UNSCR 707 was issued four months after UNSCR 687, and condemned Iraq for not meeting the burden set out in the previous resolution.<sup>4</sup> This is the first time in a long pattern, in which Iraq withheld required information from the United Nations Special

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<sup>1</sup> Security Council Resolution 687, s/res/687 (April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1991), <http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/687.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> IBID.

<sup>3</sup> IBID.

<sup>4</sup> Security Council Resolution 707, s/res/707 (August 15, 1991), <http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/707.pdf>

Commission (UNSCOM). This pattern of defiance, started under the Bush administration and continued under the Clinton administration was a cause of tension between the United States and Iraq.

UNSCR 1134 and UNSCR 1137 were both released in 1997 and once again condemned Iraq's for failure to comply with UNSCR 687.<sup>5</sup> On November 26, 1997, President Clinton wrote his quarterly update to Congress concerning Iraq's compliance with UN Security Resolutions.<sup>6</sup> In this letter Clinton noted that on October 29, 1997, Iraq blocked UNSCOM access to WMD sites, which led to a month long standoff that was resolved on November 20, 1997.<sup>7</sup> The resolution lasted a little under two months, when Iraq refused to allow inspectors into the country on January 19, 1998.<sup>8</sup>

The pattern of non-compliance undermined confidence in the United Nation's ability to rid Iraq of its WMD. Additionally, WMD's had been labeled a national security threat since 1991, and if Iraq continued to undermine UNSCOM then there was a possibility that they would retain their stockpile. For the reasons mentioned above, Iraq's was at the top of America's 1998 foreign policy docket. As the President continued to pursue containment, Congress started to examine a policy orientated on regime change. This difference in opinion, along with Iraq's continued disobedience, led to the securitization move: the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act. The Iraq Liberation Act

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<sup>5</sup> For more see: Security Council Resolution 1134, S/RES/1134 (October 23 1997) <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1134> and Security Council Resolution 1137, S/RES/1137 (November 12, 1997) <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1137>.

<sup>6</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, "Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions, November 26<sup>th</sup> 1997," In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1997* <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=53638&st=iraq&st1=>

<sup>7</sup> IBID.

<sup>8</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, "Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1998," In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1998* <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=55060&st=Iraq&st1=>

transitioned the United States away from a policy of containment and toward a policy focused on regime change in Iraq.

### **The Cabinet**

President Clinton's cabinet committed to weaken and contain Saddam Hussein. The maintenance of the status quo policy required the preservation of the international sanction regime. On March 29, 1997, the U.S. State Department compiled a memo titled "Iraq's Charm Offensive: USG Response."<sup>9</sup> The memo coordinated U.S. diplomats' talking points to counter Iraq's appeal to the international community to lift U.N. sanctions. Iraq had succeeded in "charming" Russia and France and the United States feared that an international consensus would call for the end of sanctions, despite the fact that Iraq failed to meet their obligations under UNSCR 687.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the memo emphasized the importance of sanctions. "At a time when we are tightening sanctions enforcement on Iraq and seeking to increase Saddam Hussein's political isolation, we need to make it clear to our friends that we consider any movement towards Iraq to be counterproductive."<sup>11</sup> This memo reinforced the Clinton administration's commitment to the international sanction regime.

An October 1997 report from the Defense Intelligence Assessment, tested potential scenarios where the United States military was needed to end a conflict with Iraq. "The destruction of Iraqi WMD stockpiles... is an important end state for coalition forces. This may necessitate U.S. forces being inspectors, or enforcers of postwar

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<sup>9</sup> DNAS collection: Targeting Iraq, 1997-2004, United States, Department of States, confidential, *Iraq's Charm Offensive: USG Response*, March 29, 1997, <https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1910230746/abstract/230EFB0FE21D4BA5PQ/13?accountid=10141>

<sup>10</sup> David Rieff, "Were Sanctions Right?", *New York Times*, July 27<sup>th</sup> 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/27/magazine/were-sanctions-right.html>

<sup>11</sup> DNAS collection: *Iraq's Charm Offensive*

sanctions. A prolonged UN involvement, with U.S. military and logistic support, is another possibility.”<sup>12</sup> President Clinton believed the latter proposal was best for America, and thus called on the international community to hold Iraq accountable. The memo was clear; America’s end goal was the elimination of Saddam’s WMD’s and not the removal of Saddam Hussein from power.<sup>13</sup> With the call for regime change avoided, the DIA reaffirmed that the national interest in Iraq was the WMD’s and not the political leadership of Iraq. The limited interest in only the capabilities of the Iraqi government continued to be the only interest of the Clinton administration until the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act in 1998.

On February 17, 1998, President Clinton stood in front of the military bureaucracy at the Pentagon, and readied the military and the American people for a strike on Iraq. The composition of President Clinton’s speech will be assessed later in the chapter, but his speech was an important pre-cursor to the CNN town hall that took place on February 18.<sup>14</sup> Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Secretary of Defense William Cohen and National Security Advisor Sandy Berger had to defend President Clinton’s threat of a military strike. In her opening statement, Madeleine Albright commented that Iraq faced a strict binary choice, comply with UNSCOM or the United States would strike potential WMD sites.<sup>15</sup> To follow up on Secretary Albright’s statement Secretary

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<sup>12</sup> DNAS collection: Targeting Iraq, 1997-2004, United States, Defense Intelligence Agency, classification excised, *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs: Progress, Problems, and Potential Vulnerabilities*, October 1997, <https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1910231283/fulltextPDF/10E82DEF839D4AB9PQ/11?accountid=10141>

<sup>13</sup> IBID.

<sup>14</sup> Ralph Begleiter, “U.S. policy on Iraq draws fire in Ohio”, *CNN*, February 18<sup>th</sup> 1998, <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9802/18/town.meeting.folo/>

<sup>15</sup> IBID.

Cohen stated that airstrikes would diminish Iraq's ability to produce WMD's.<sup>16</sup> The cabinet did not advocate for regime change or suggest that a long-term goal involved the removal Saddam Hussein. As I discussed in the introduction, the limited airstrike proposal was not a securitization move, because it did not involve securitizing a new referent object.

By the end of March, the United States influence in the Middle East had diminished. On March 20, 1998, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) issued a memo titled "U.S. Position Eroding Sharply in the Middle East."<sup>17</sup> The memo contained statements that Arab countries would not accept U.S. military action against Iraq. Additionally, these countries expected the U.N. sanctions to be ended. Furthermore, France and Russia attempted to undermine sanction efforts in Iraq and led the effort to end all U.N. sanctions against Iraq.<sup>18</sup> The memo's impact was limited because on March 5, the United States came to an agreement with Iraq that prevented any further escalation.

Iraq maintained the deal with the U.N. through the summer months. On July 17, the NIC put together a report titled "Iraq: Prospect for Confrontation."<sup>19</sup> This memo served as a preventive guide. Analysts within the NIC predicted potential flare-ups that could lead to conflict between Iraq and the United States. The memo assessed that Saddam Hussein would likely pick a fight with UNSCOM— on August 6, this prediction came true — in an attempt to undermine the international coalition that maintained the

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<sup>16</sup> IBID.

<sup>17</sup> DNAS collection: Targeting Iraq, 1997-2004, United States, Director of Central Intelligence, National Intelligence Council, Secret, *U.S. Position Eroding Sharply in the Middle East*, March 20, 1998, <https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1910230860/abstract/7FAFA913E5294400PQ/18?accountid=10141>

<sup>18</sup> IBID.

<sup>19</sup> DNAS collection: Targeting Iraq, 1997-2004, United States, Director of Central Intelligence, National Intelligence Council, Secret, *Iraq: Prospects for Confrontation*, July 17, 1998, <https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1910230831/abstract/FA96FF7F83BF432DPQ/19?accountid=10141>

sanctions on Iraq.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, this memo concluded that Saddam Hussein lacked the ability to attack neighboring countries, Kuwait and Israel.<sup>21</sup> Overall, Saddam Hussein's primary goal was to maintain power and therefore he conducted himself in a rational way.

In 1997, the President's cabinet pursued the policy of containment toward Iraq. Even with the introduction of a possible military airstrike against WMD sites, the cabinet remained consistent, Saddam Hussein did not threaten America's national security. Therefore, the cabinet did not participate in the securitization process.

### **Congress**

In 1998, Republicans controlled both branches of Congress. In the House, congressional Republicans planted the seeds for the impeachment of President Clinton. Also during this time, Republicans prepared to shift America's foreign policy toward regime change. Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman in the House and Majority Leader Trent Lott in the Senate led the charge against President Clinton's Iraq policy. The following section examined three hearings, two in the House and one in the Senate. Additionally, two pieces of legislation were reviewed, the 1998 Supplemental Appropriation and Recessions Act, and the Iraq Liberation Act. The inaction by President toward Iraq, granted the legislative branch an opportunity to become the securitizing actor.

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<sup>20</sup> IBID.

<sup>21</sup> IBID.

On February 25, 1998, the House Committee on International Relations held a hearing on “U.S. Options In Confronting Iraq.”<sup>22</sup> The tone of the hearing was skeptical and dreary. Chairman Gilman addressed this tone in his opening remarks.

The subject of today's hearing is U.S. options in confronting Iraq. When we planned this hearing initially, we thought we'd spend most of our time today exploring the risks and rewards associated with military action against Iraq, but the agreement reached in Iraq two days ago by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has changed that equation... Many of us are skeptical of that agreement. Saddam Hussein has broken his word to the United Nations many times before. Perhaps this time he means to honor his commitments, but we tend to have some skepticism about all of that. There are several provisions within the agreement that are deeply troubling. It obligates U.N. weapons inspectors to, and I quote, "respect the legitimate concerns of Iraq relating to national security, sovereignty, and dignity." That sounds an awful lot like Saddam Hussein's description of what the dispute was all about in the first place.<sup>23</sup>

As his opening statement continued on Chairman Gilman attacked President Clinton's strategy in Iraq. Before he ceded the floor, Chairman Gilman concluded with a question of President Clinton's resolve toward the 'true' problem of Iraq, Saddam Hussein.<sup>24</sup> Chairman Gilman's preferred policy of regime change loomed in the background, and was taken up by the witnesses during the hearing.

Seated at the witness tables were Richard Haas, Paul Wolfowitz, David Kay, and Eliot Cohen. Wolfowitz and Cohen were colleagues at Johns Hopkins SAIS and wrote for Project for the New American Century. The Project for the New American Century was a think tank heavily influenced by neoconservative foreign policy thinkers. Before President Clinton's 1998 State of the Union, the Project for the New American Century

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Options In Confronting Iraq: Hearing Before *Committee on International Relations*, House, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (February 1998)

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Options In Confronting Iraq: Hearing Before *Committee on International Relations*, House, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (February 1998) (Testimony of Chairman Gilman).

<sup>24</sup> *IBID.*

sent President Clinton a letter that urged him to shift his policy on Iraq.<sup>25</sup> The letter stated President Clinton had a unique opportunity at the State of the Union “to enunciate a new strategy that would secure the interests of the U.S. and our friends and allies around the world. That strategy should aim, above all, at the removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime from power.”<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the letter advocated for the President to use military force to rid Iraq of its WMD’s.

David Kay and Richard Haas also supported the policy of regime change. During question and answers, David Kay stressed that Saddam Hussein’s removal was the only guarantee that Iraq would give up its WMD’s:

But when you address the question of whether any inspection system can finally uproot completely a weapons program in a country as large as Iraq—and most times we have only 200 U.N. inspectors in the whole country—if the Iraqi regime is determined to protect it, I say, indeed, you cannot hope that inspection, just like I do not think you can hope that air power, can do it, and that is why I put such great emphasis on a political strategy that is designed not to do business with Saddam, but to remove Saddam from power.<sup>27</sup>

Kay’s quote, if true, undermined the President’s policy toward Iraq. President Clinton hoped to rid Iraq of its WMD’s and then reintegrate Iraq back into the international community. If what David Kay says is true, then the Clinton policy of sanctions and inspections is like a broken levee: totally ineffective.

By inviting four witnesses who agreed that the long-term interest of the United States was the removal of Saddam Hussein from power, Chairman Gillman hoped to

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<sup>25</sup> DNAS collection: Targeting Iraq, 1997-2004, Project for the New American Century, Non-Classified, *Policy Toward Iraq*, January 26<sup>th</sup> 1998, <https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1910230980/abstract/5B4632B01350433DPQ/16?accountid=10141>

<sup>26</sup> IBID.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Options In Confronting Iraq: Hearing Before *Committee on International Relations*, House, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (February 1998) (Testimony of Dr. David Kay).



prime his congressional colleagues. While some Congressman quibbled about the ramifications of military strikes, nobody questioned the policy of regime change. Members of Congress missed an opportunity to debate the merits of regime change, and another medium for deliberation did not present itself. The idea introduced in February, became the United States' official policy on October 31, 1998, when the President signed the Iraq Liberation Act.

The following week, the Senate's subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs held a hearing titled "Iraq: Can Saddam be Overthrown."<sup>28</sup> The importance of the hearing is minuscule; only two Senators, Senator Brownback and Senator Robb, were in attendance. However, Congress, as an institution, openly asked the question if a foreign leader could be overthrown. Additionally, similar to the House witnesses, the four witnesses held the same long-term policy goal, regime change in Iraq. Even more significant was the primary witness, Ahmed Chalabi, spokesman for the Iraqi National Congress, better known as the Iraqi government in exile. Congress, as an institution, provided a platform for a shadow government, while President Clinton attempted to preserve the international inspection regime. At best Congress was showed its disapproval for Clinton's policy and at worse Congress actively tried to undermine the negotiations between the United States and Iraq.

Mr. Chalabi advocated for a stronger and more militaristic policy toward Iraq. Mr. Chalabi claimed that the current support for Iraq's opposition groups were not sufficient,

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<sup>28</sup> Iraq: Can Saddam be Overthrown: Hearing Before *Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs*, Senate, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (February 1998).

and future aid needed to be made in an overt manner.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Mr. Chalabi stated that the U.S. had to do more with its air power superiority.<sup>30</sup> Mr. Chalabi statements were given to an empty committee room, but his ideas would find their way into the Iraq Liberation Act.

The second panel contained two members from The Project of the New American Century, James Woolsey and Zalmay Khalilzad, and one familiar face, Richard Haas. Woolsey claimed that President Clinton's Iraq policy has been "flaccid and feckless."<sup>31</sup> Additionally, Woolsey agreed with his Project of the New American Century colleagues that if Saddam Hussein violated any future agreement his defiance warranted the use of force. Khalilzad echoed Woolsey's sentiment and added that the opposition forces in Iraq needed arms supplied by the United States.<sup>32</sup> The recommendation Khalilzad made was adopted in the Iraq Liberation Act. Section 4 subsection B reads: "The President is authorized to direct the drawdown of defense articles from the stocks of the Department of Defense, defense services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training for such organizations."<sup>33</sup> Despite the lack of Senators present at the hearing, the ideas espoused by the witnesses were adopted in the Iraq Liberation Act. These hearings acted to build the necessary context that President Clinton's Iraq strategy lacked the necessary means to deal with the issues of WMD's. Furthermore, as the contents of these hearings suggested that a strategy that did not remove Saddam Hussein from power

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<sup>29</sup> Iraq: Can Saddam be Overthrown: Hearing Before *Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs*, Senate, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (February 1998), (Ahmed Chalabi Testimony)

<sup>30</sup> IBID.

<sup>31</sup> Iraq: Can Saddam be Overthrown: Hearing Before *Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs*, Senate, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (February 1998), (Richard Woolsey Testimony)

<sup>32</sup> Iraq: Can Saddam be Overthrown: Hearing Before *Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs*, Senate, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (February 1998), (Zalmay Khalilzad Testimony)

<sup>33</sup> H.R. Public Law No: 105-338, 105th Cong., U.S. G.P.O. 112 (1998) (enacted).

would fail. With an administration that refused to consider regime change, Congress needed to become the securitizing actor and force the President to accept the ideas espoused in these hearings.

A precursor to the Iraq Liberation Act was the 1998 Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions act. Included, by Senator Lott of Mississippi, in the appropriation bill was section 10008. Section 10008 provided President Clinton with \$10 million to “to support the democratic opposition and to establish a 'Radio Free Iraq.’”<sup>34</sup> This move was applauded by the Center for Security Policy which ran a headline that read, “Sen. Lott Shows How and Secures Means to Topple Saddam.” In addition to securing millions of dollars, Senator Lott met with Ahmed Chalabi and called upon President Clinton to do the same.<sup>35</sup> While I do not consider this allotment of funds to be the securitizing move, it set the precedent for the allocation of funds which intended to cause regime change.

Over the six-month tenure during Iraq’s compliance with UNSCOM, Congress remained quiet on the issue of Iraq. On August 6, one month after Iraq prevented UNSCOM inspectors from doing their jobs, the House committee on International Relations held a hearing titled “Disarming Iraq: The Status of Weapons Inspections.”<sup>36</sup> This hearing resembled a typical hearing with two guests; Ambassador Indyk, represented the administration, and Major William Ritter, a former UNSCOM inspector and a critic of the Clinton administration. From the start, Chairman Gilman portrayed

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<sup>34</sup> DNAS collection: Targeting Iraq, 1997-2004, Center for Security Policy, Non-Classified, *Sen. Lott Shows How, and Secures Means, to Topple Saddam*, April 28<sup>th</sup> 1998, <https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1910230452/C569D56A16DB4C8CPQ/14?accountid=10141>

<sup>35</sup> IBID.

<sup>36</sup> Disarming Iraq: The Status of Weapons Inspection: Hearing Before *Committee on International Relations*, House, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (September 1998)

Major Ritter as a patriot who quit his job because the Clinton meddled with UNSCOM protocols:

Today, we need to take up the challenge laid down by Mr. Ritter, who resigned his post with UNSCOM on August 26 and put his professional career on the line, because he realized that this Administration would no longer provide the political support and the credible threat of military force to ensure that UNSCOM can fulfill its mandate.<sup>37</sup>

Major Ritter claimed that President Clinton's lack of resolve, related to airstrikes, allowed gave Iraq an incentive to withhold information from UNSCOM. Furthermore, Major Ritter claimed that the Clinton administration meddled with UNSCOM inspection scheduled, and tried to politicize the process.<sup>38</sup> Chairman Gilman used his opening statement to inflate the power of Saddam Hussein. "If we can't summon the will to act against Saddam Hussein today, how will we summon the will to do so if and when he were to acquire a nuclear and long range missile capability?"<sup>39</sup> Chairman Gilman's statement meets the definition of a speech act. The fear of a nuclear weapons is a common trope that has been used since the Cold War to advocate for securitization policy. Throughout the two House hearings, Chairman Gilman's rhetoric was used to prime his fellow colleagues to accept his preferred policy preferences.

There is no evidence that Iraq had become a greater threat to the United States because of President Clinton's policy. Quite the contrary, the DCI issued a classified report in 1999, which stated the Iraqi military had been weakened since 1991 and that an

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<sup>37</sup> Disarming Iraq: The Status of Weapons Inspection: Hearing Before *Committee on International Relations*, House, 105<sup>th</sup> Cong. (September 1998) (Chairman Gilman Testimony)

<sup>38</sup> Fred Hiatt, "The Betrayal of Scott Ritter," *Washington Post*, September 6, 1998 <[https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/09/06/the-betrayal-of-scott-ritter/ca59ab1e-3c0a-4f23-a803-079ad8c32036/?utm\\_term=.9fe4662adfdc](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/09/06/the-betrayal-of-scott-ritter/ca59ab1e-3c0a-4f23-a803-079ad8c32036/?utm_term=.9fe4662adfdc)>.

<sup>39</sup> IBID.

Iraqi attack against Saudi Arabia was no longer feasible.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, a majority of Iraq's WMD stockpile was destroyed by UNSCOM.<sup>41</sup> However, Chairman Gilman was not concerned with the facts, and his opening statement called upon Congress to change the United States policy as it related to Iraq.

The securitization move happened on September 28, 1998 when Congressman Gilman introduced the Iraq Liberation Act. When he introduced the bill Congressman Gilman did exactly what Ahmed Chalabi recommended: he was overt about the bill's intention. Mr. Gilman's statement in the Congressional Record reads: "As the title suggests, the purpose of this legislation is to finally and irrevocably commit the United States to the removal from power of the regime headed by Saddam Hussein."<sup>42</sup> The introduction of the bill and the overt statement was Congressman Gilman attempt to signal to the audience, the President, that the Iraq Liberation Act represented a shift in U.S. policy toward regime change. Furthermore, Congressman Gilman advocated for a future U.S. invasion, **"Some suggest that our nation should go to war and rid the Persian Gulf of the threat posed by Saddam. We may yet be compelled to do so, but before we put American lives at risk in that far away land, we have a duty to explore the alternatives (Emphasis Added)."**<sup>43</sup>

The two above statements and the subsequent vote was the securitization move. Chairman Gilman had built a context that policy change was necessary, and then used his

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<sup>40</sup> DNAS collection: Targeting Iraq, 1997-2004, United States, Director of Central Intelligence, National Intelligence Council, Secret, *Iraqi Military Capabilities through 2003*, April 1999, <https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/dnsa/docview/1910230589/abstract/D0E7B92E62614E40PQ/21?accountid=10141>

<sup>41</sup> Council of Foreign Relations, "Iraq: Weapons Inspections: 1991-1998," *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 3, 2005 <<https://www.cfr.org/background/iraq-weapons-inspections-1991-1998>>.

<sup>42</sup> Congressional Record, Extension of Remark, Hon. Benjamin A. Gilman, *Introduction of H.R. 4566 – Iraq Liberation Act of 1998*, E1857, <https://www.congress.gov/crec/1998/10/01/CREC-1998-10-01-pt1-PgE1857.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> IBID.

political capital to propose a shift in policy. Once Congress voted to pass the Iraq Liberation Act, the President had an opportunity, as an audience member, to support or reject the securitizing move. When President Clinton signed the bill into law the securitization process was complete.

In 1998 Congress took control of America's foreign policy, particularly on the issue of Iraq. The Washington Post wrote that the Iraq Liberation Act would force the President toward war with Iraq. On October 20, 1998, the front page of the Washington Post headline read: "Congress Stokes Visions Of War to Oust Saddam; White House Fears Fiasco in Aid to Rebels."<sup>44</sup> Congress, was the securitizing actor during the Clinton administration, which is contrary to most securitization literature. Since Congress was the securitizing actor, the President became the intended audience. Therefore, President Clinton, after signing the bill into law, shifted his preferred policy to align it to be in compliance with the more hawkish Iraq Liberation Act. The shift in President Clinton's policy was witnessed after Operation Desert Fox and will be explored in detail the next section.

### **The President**

President Clinton supported a policy of containment toward Iraq until Congress forced the President to shift toward a more hawkish policy in the latter half of the year. President Clinton threatened military strikes in the early part of 1998, but that was not a securitizing move. Two factors prevent it from being considered a securitization move.

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<sup>44</sup> Veron Loeb, "Congress Stokes Visions Of War to Oust Saddam; White House Fears Fiasco in Aid to Rebels", *Washington Post*, October 20, 1998, <https://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/doc/408410696.html?FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&date=Oct+20%2C+1998&author=Loeb%2C+Vernon&pub=The+Washington+Post&edition=&startpage=A.01&desc=Congress+Stokes+Visions+Of+War+to+Oust+Saddam%3B+White+House+Fears+Fiasco+in+Aid+to+Rebels>.

First, the threat of WMD's were already securitized, and Congress had granted the President the power to perform airstrike. Therefore, if President Clinton pursued air strikes then he would not need the consent of an audience, which removes the issue from the securitization process. Second, as the following analysis will show, airstrikes targeted WMD sites and not the Iraqi government. The Clinton Administration distinction between WMD's and the Iraqi government meant that no attempt was made to securitize the Iraq regime. If the goal of the air strikes were to create a vacuum in Iraq or led to regime change then the air strikes would have represented a securitization move. Therefore, Clinton was an audience member that became the securitization actor after Congress passed the Iraq Liberation Act.

According to the public papers of the President, in 1998, President Clinton publicly addressed the question of Iraq eighty-five times. In his first appearance in 1998, President Clinton correctly claimed that the Iraqi military was significantly weaker than they were in the past.<sup>45</sup> During his interview with Jim Lehrer of PBS news, President Clinton stated, "**My concern is not to re-fight the Gulf War**; my concern is to prepare our people for a new century, not only in positive ways like creating a big international financial framework that works for them, as that we just talked about, but also to make sure we have the tools to protect ourselves against chemical and biological weapons (Emphasis Added)."<sup>46</sup> The phrase "my concern is not to re-fight the Gulf war" is a reference to a Senator Lott, a hawkish Republican. Senator Lott had previously suggested

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<sup>45</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City, January 8<sup>th</sup> 1998," In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1998*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=55558&st=Iraq&st1=>

<sup>46</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, "Interview With Jim Lehrer of the PBS "News Hour", January 21<sup>st</sup> 1998," In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1998*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=56080&st=Iraq&st1=>

that regime change was the only viable option to deal with Iraq. This was a commonly held view among Republicans in Congress. President Clinton statement that there would not be another second gulf war, is supported by his attempt to contain and not inflame Iraq. President Clinton did not consider regime change as a viable option.

In the same interview President Clinton claimed that the United States, as the world's only superpower, had a moral responsibility to show restraint.<sup>47</sup> Clinton's claim that America had an imperative toward peace, was an attempt to avoid escalation because he knew a military strike would end UNSCOM inspections. UNSCOM inspections were vital to President Clinton's policy of containment and therefore an airstrike would likely force him to rethink his preferred policy.

In February, tensions continued to rise, as airstrikes against Iraq became a serious possibility. A reporter asked President Clinton, "Mr. President there are a lot of Republican leaders and armchair generals who want to change your policy toward Iraq and to take out Saddam. What is your feeling about that now?"<sup>48</sup> President Clinton rejected the idea of the United States sponsored regime change. "Would the Iraqi people be better off if there were a change in leadership? I certainly think they would be. But that is not what the United Nations has authorized us to do; that is not what our immediate interest is about."<sup>49</sup> The statement showcased President Clinton's attempt to maintain a limited U.S. interest in the region. The limited interest was the removal of

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<sup>47</sup> IBID.

<sup>48</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, "Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and an Exchange With Reporters, February 5<sup>th</sup> 1998," In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1998*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=55126&st=Iraq&st1=>

<sup>49</sup> IBID.



WMD's from Iraq, and his statement suggested that was the only policy the United States was set to pursue.

As noted earlier in the chapter, President Clinton addressed the Pentagon on February 17, 1998. The tone of the speech was more militaristic than previous statements, as President Clinton casted Saddam as a threat against his own people, regional security, and the international order.<sup>50</sup> Even with the inflation of the Saddam threat, President Clinton remained vigilant that the airstrikes goal were to destroy Saddam's WMD stockpile and nothing else. "If Saddam rejects peace and we have to use force, our purpose is clear: We want to seriously diminish the threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program. We want to seriously reduce his capacity to threaten his neighbors."<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, President Clinton offered Saddam a way out, "Saddam Hussein could end this crisis tomorrow, simply by letting the weapons inspectors complete their mission. He made a solemn commitment to the international community to do that and to give up his weapons of mass destruction a long time ago, now."<sup>52</sup> President Clinton's speech had a dual-purpose, he wanted to send a message of strength to the American public, American forces, and the international community. Additionally, he appealed to Saddam Hussein that diplomacy was still an option. President Clinton's policy preferences differed from his Republican colleagues, and therefore he remained committed to sanctions and inspections.

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<sup>50</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, "Remarks at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, February 17<sup>th</sup> 1998," In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1998*,

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=55483&st=Iraq&st1=>

<sup>51</sup> IBID.

<sup>52</sup> IBID.

The U.N. and Iraq came to an agreement, which in turn prevented an U.S. airstrike. After the deal, President Clinton rarely mentioned Iraq in his public appearances. On June 24, in his letter to Congressional leaders on Iraq's compliance with United Nations Security Resolution, President Clinton admitted that Iraq was in compliance with UNSCOM but Iraq had not met its responsibilities related to UNSCR 687.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, President Clinton mentioned the 1998 Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act. The signing statement did not mention the appropriation for Iraqi opposition group, but President Clinton used his letter to Congress to pay lip service to the measure.

On May 1, I signed into law the 1998 Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act. This legislation provides funding for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to initiate a surrogate broadcast service for the Iraqi people. It also provides funding for efforts to support the democratic Iraqi opposition in presenting a credible alternative to the present Iraqi regime and compiling information to support the indictment of Iraqi officials for war crimes. These new programs will enable us to redouble our work with the Iraqi opposition to support their efforts to build a pluralistic, peaceful Iraq that observes the international rule of law and respects basic human rights.<sup>54</sup>

I refer to this statement as Clinton paying lip service to Congress because no public statement was made in support of Congress's policy of regime change. If President Clinton had announced this policy during a press conference then it could be interpreted as an acceptance of Congresses policy. Furthermore, it was an improper time to announce a change in U.S. policy. As President Clinton noted in his report, Iraq was complying with the UNSCOM and to openly flaunt the United States was pursuing regime change in Iraq would have undermined the relative success. This is not a one off occurrence, when

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<sup>53</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, "Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions, June 24<sup>th</sup> 1998," In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1998*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=56206&st=Iraq&st1=>

<sup>54</sup> IBID.

President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act his statement did not portray the Chairman Gilman desire for regime change.

After he signed the Iraq Liberation Act into law, President Clinton stated that this act was how Congress perceived the problem. “This Act makes clear **that it is the sense of the Congress** that the United States should support those elements of the Iraqi opposition that advocate a very different future for Iraq than the bitter reality of internal repression and external aggression that the current regime in Baghdad now offers (Emphasis added).”<sup>55</sup> Throughout the statement President Clinton continually suggested that the main objective for the United States was the workability of UNSCOM inspections.<sup>56</sup> Ironically, the Iraq Liberation Act, undermined UNSCOM. On October 31, the same day President Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act into law, Iraq announced that it would not allow UNSCOM inspectors into their country.<sup>57</sup> America had just adopted a measure to directly fund his opposition, and therefore Saddam had no incentive to allow inspectors back into his country. While there is no publicly available information to confirm that the Iraq Liberation Act led Saddam to block inspectors from entering the country, it is a well-reasoned inference.

Saddam’s defiance led President Clinton to launch airstrike against Iraq on December 16. Referred to as Operation Desert Fox, the stated purpose of the strikes were to cripple Saddam’s ability to create and disperse WMD’s. The strikes were consistent

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<sup>55</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, “Statement on Signing the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, October 31<sup>st</sup> 1998,” In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1998*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=55205&st=Iraq&st1=>

<sup>56</sup> On November 16, 1998, Defense Secretary Cohen told reporters that the President’s signing of the Iraq Liberation Act was not a call to overthrow Saddam Hussein. See: Vernon Loeb, “Saddam’s Iraqi Foes Heartened By Clinton,” *Washington Post*, November 16, 1998 <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/iraq/stories/iraq111698b.htm>>.

<sup>57</sup> BBC, “Timeline: Iraq Weapons Inspection, *BBC*, November 18, 2002, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/2167933.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2167933.stm)

with President Clinton's objectives stated in his February Pentagon speech. However, during his address to the American people President Clinton endorsed the idea of regime change in Iraq.

The hard fact is that so long as Saddam remains in power, he threatens the well being of his people, the peace of his region, the security of the world. The best way to end that threat once and for all is with a new Iraqi Government, a Government ready to live in peace with its neighbors, a Government that respects the rights of its people. Bringing change in Baghdad will take time and effort. We will strengthen our engagement with the full range of Iraqi opposition forces and work with them effectively and prudently.<sup>58</sup>

This was the first time President Clinton publicly advocated for regime change in Iraq. As mentioned in the Congress section, President Clinton the audience in the securitization move. President Clinton's signature was the required audience approval of the securitizing move. After he signed the bill into law, President Clinton then became the securitization actor. The Iraq Liberation Act granted the President plenary power on deciding which resistance groups to back. Section 5 (a) of the Iraq Liberation Act reads, "Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall designate one or more Iraqi democratic opposition organizations that the President determines satisfy the criteria set forth in subsection (c) as eligible to receive assistance under section 4."<sup>59</sup> The Iraq Liberation Act provided President Clinton with additional resources, and therefore he assumed the role of a securitization actor.

## **The Media**

To judge the role the media played in the securitization process I viewed the opened pages of the Washington Post and The New York Times one month before the signing

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<sup>58</sup> 42, Bill Clinton, "Address to the Nation Announcing Military Strikes on Iraq, December 16<sup>th</sup> 1998," In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States Bill Clinton, 1998*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=55414&st=Iraq&st1=>

<sup>59</sup> H.R. Public Law No: 105-338, 105th Cong., U.S. G.P.O. 112 (1998) (enacted).

of the Iraq Liberation Act and one week after the act was signed into law. Therefore, the timeframe for the selections were between September 24, and November 7. The Washington Post and the New York Times each had nine total selections during this time period. Out of the nine selections each had one that was not relevant to the scope of this paper. For each article I rated the tone negative, neutral, or positive. To receive a positive rating the article had to advocate for or accept President Clinton's policy. A neutral rating was given if the article did not advocate or criticize President Clinton's policy. Finally, a negative rating was given if the article was critical of President Clinton's policy. Out of the eight Washington Post selections, five were negative, two were neutral, and one was positive. The New York Times articles were more critical, all eight selections were negative. The New York Times number, however, is skewed because the op-ed page had only two authors writing about Iraq during this time. Both authors were critical of President Clinton and their articles contributed to the context surrounding the securitization move.

### **Washington Post**

The two articles that were rated neutral were critical of U.S. military power in Iraq. Both pieces, "Dwindling Ranks" and "Envisioning War"<sup>60</sup> argued that the military was overstretched, and the resources necessary to fight a war were not available. In "Dwindling Ranks" Patrick Paxton noted that the United States lacked the resources to deploy the naval and air forces units necessary to launch an attack against Saddam's WMD sites.<sup>61</sup> "Envisioning War" took an international relations approach to an attack on

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<sup>60</sup> Patrick B. Paxton, "Dwindling Ranks", *Washington Post*, September 24<sup>th</sup> 1998, "LexisNexis Academic" and David F. Rudgers, "Envisioning War", *Washington Post*, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1998, "LexisNexis Academic".

<sup>61</sup> Paxton, "Dwindling Ranks".

Iraq. This op-ed was a response to the Washington Post “Congress Stokes Visions of War” piece which was cited earlier in this chapter. This piece questioned U.S. strategic interest in the region, how a strike that targeted Saddam would work, and who would fill the vacuum when Saddam was ousted.<sup>62</sup> This article was critical of Congresses hawkish nature, but did not take a stance on President Clinton’s policy.

The one positive article came from the Ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Joe Biden. This article is marked as positive but, it should be noted that Iraq is mentioned tangentially in the article. Senator Biden’s article is titled “Our Money Could Talk at the U.N.” and argued for Congressional Republicans to fund the U.N. In the article Biden mentioned that U.S. dollars go directly to UNSCOM inspectors and the current policy had succeeded in containing Iraq.<sup>63</sup> The dedication of one sentence related to Iraq does not seem like much, however it was a tacit approval of President Clinton’s policy in Iraq. Notwithstanding the op-ed, Senator Biden did not object to the Iraq Liberation Act.

The five negative articles used strong language and were beyond critical of President Clinton’s policy in Iraq. Michael Kelly in his piece “No Stopping Saddam” labeled Clinton’s policy toward Iraq appeasement.<sup>64</sup> George F. Will in his piece “Ersatz Seriousness About Serbia” stated that Saddam controlled Clinton like a yo-yo. According to George Will, Saddam pulled Clinton’s string however he saw fit.<sup>65</sup> In Jim Hoagland piece he quoted U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan who said, “The will isn’t there for

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<sup>62</sup> Rudgers, “Envisioning War”.

<sup>63</sup> Joseph R. Biden Jr., “Our Money Could Talk At the U.N.”, *Washington Post*, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1998, “LexisNexis Academic”.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Kelly, “No Stopping Saddam”, *Washington Post*, November 4 1998, “LexisNexis Academic”.

<sup>65</sup> George F. Will, “Ersatz Seriousness About Serbia”, *Washington Post*, October 8 1998, “LexisNexis Academic”.

the U.S. to live up to its agreement.”<sup>66</sup> That was a damning statement, as Kofi Annan oversaw the UNSCOM inspections. The elites were critical of President Clinton’s policy toward Iraq and provided a context that action needed to be taken.

Jim Hoagland’s article on November 5, provided an insight into the role of the media as a securitizing actor. Hoagland’s article titled “Saddam’s Endless War” repeated the failures of President Clinton’s Iraq policy.<sup>67</sup> At the end of his piece Jim Hoagland advocated for the President to use the Iraq Liberation Act to supply Iraqi rebels with arms. According to Hoagland “The immediate military impact of weapons supplies to the opposition would be very limited in the best of circumstances. The importance of the act lies in the political signal that using it would send.”<sup>68</sup> The final sentence of the article echoed the sentiment of David Kay’s statement in front of Congress, with Saddam in power there will never be peace in Iraq and the United States would never been able to rid Iraq of its WMD’s.

### **New York Times**

William Safire and A.M. Rosenthal represent the two op-ed columnists for the New York Times that wrote on Iraq. The content of the articles does not differ from the Washington Post’s content, as Rosenthal and Safire used colorful language that barraged Clinton’s Iraq policy. In William Safire’s article “Dealing with Dictators” he took a hardline that Congress had not done enough in passing the Iraq Liberation Act.

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<sup>66</sup> Jim Hoagland, “Bluster and Blink”, *Washington Post*, October 22 1998, “LexisNexis Academic”.

<sup>67</sup> Jim Hoagland, “Saddam’s Endless War”, *Washington Post*, November 5 1998, “LexisNexis Academic”.

<sup>68</sup> IBID.

Our hawks say: Since we're not about to use our military power against Saddam, at least let's try something in the overthrow line. He is said to have stomach cancer, and his generals may not want to wait around. Clinton aggressive multilateralists say: As long as we're not committing our own forces, we'll give it a cushion shot. But don't blame us for a Bay of Pigs. Does this make sense? In the presence of a threat of mass destruction, and in the absence of a command decision to remove that threat, a half-measure of trying to foment an indigenous coup is better than no measure at all.<sup>69</sup>

Both the Washington Post and the New York Times served an important role in the context that surrounded the Iraq threat. This context justified Congress's action.

### **The American Public**

The American public remained uninterested with President Clinton's Iraq policy. Over the span of one year 19 polls were conducted by various organizations that asked the American public whether they approved or disapproved of President Clinton's handling of Iraq.<sup>70</sup> The first poll of the year, conducted by ABC between the dates of January 15, and January 19, showed that 53% of the American people supported Clinton's policy while 39% disapproved of his policy.<sup>71</sup> According to an ABC poll conducted on January 28, and January 29, in two weeks, President Clinton gained 18 percentage approval points which gave him a total of 71% approval compared to a 19% disapproval rating.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> William Safire, "Dealing With Dictators", *New York Times*, October 22 1998, "LexisNexis Academic"

<sup>70</sup> These polls come from the Roper Center Database

<sup>71</sup> ABC News and Washington Post, 1998, *ABC News and Washington Post Poll*, January 1998, [https://ropercenter-cornell-edu.ccl.idm.oclc.org/CFIDE/cf/action/ipoll/questionDetail.cfm?keyword=iraq&keywordoptions=1&exclude=&excludeOptions=1&topic=Any&organization=Any&label=&fromdate=01/01/1998&toDate=12/31/1998&title=&sponsor=&studydate=January%2015-19,%201998&sample=1206&qstn\\_list=&qstnid=339438&qstn\\_id4=339438&study\\_list=&lastSearchId=317674717931&archno=USABCWASH1998-6912&keywordDisplay=](https://ropercenter-cornell-edu.ccl.idm.oclc.org/CFIDE/cf/action/ipoll/questionDetail.cfm?keyword=iraq&keywordoptions=1&exclude=&excludeOptions=1&topic=Any&organization=Any&label=&fromdate=01/01/1998&toDate=12/31/1998&title=&sponsor=&studydate=January%2015-19,%201998&sample=1206&qstn_list=&qstnid=339438&qstn_id4=339438&study_list=&lastSearchId=317674717931&archno=USABCWASH1998-6912&keywordDisplay=)

<sup>72</sup> ABC News, 1998, *ABC News Poll*, January 1998, [https://ropercenter-cornell-edu.ccl.idm.oclc.org/CFIDE/cf/action/ipoll/questionDetail.cfm?keyword=iraq&keywordoptions=1&exclude=&excludeOptions=1&topic=Any&organization=Any&label=&fromdate=01/01/1998&toDate=12/31/1998&title=&sponsor=&studydate=01-JAN-34&sample=1021&qstn\\_list=&qstnid=338812&qstn\\_id4=338812&study\\_list=&lastSearchId=31](https://ropercenter-cornell-edu.ccl.idm.oclc.org/CFIDE/cf/action/ipoll/questionDetail.cfm?keyword=iraq&keywordoptions=1&exclude=&excludeOptions=1&topic=Any&organization=Any&label=&fromdate=01/01/1998&toDate=12/31/1998&title=&sponsor=&studydate=01-JAN-34&sample=1021&qstn_list=&qstnid=338812&qstn_id4=338812&study_list=&lastSearchId=31)



President Clinton averaged a 65% approval rating and a 24% disapproval rating for his Iraq policy. One telling statistic is there are no polls conducted during August, September, or October, the months where Congress created the context necessary to securitize the issue. Furthermore, the Iraq issue did not factor into the 1998 midterm election, as Democrats did not lose any Senate seats and picked up 5 seats in the House of Representatives. Overall, the American public did not play a role in the securitization of the Iraq issue. Likely the issue of Iraq was not salient to the American public and the lack of a push from the President kept the issue salient only among the elites in Washington D.C.

## **Conclusion**

The year of 1998 saw tensions flare within the halls of Washington D.C. where Congress thought the Clinton administration policy toward Iraq was flawed. As Iraq continued to defy U.N. Security Council Resolutions President Clinton began the process of planning military strikes against Iraq WMD sites. According to Congress these plans were inadequate because it did not address the root cause of the problem, Saddam Hussein. Congress began a yearlong process that started with the hearings in both the House and the Senate, to securitize the Iraq issue. By successfully securitizing the issue, through the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act, Congress was the securitizing actor. The audience, the President and the President's cabinet, took the action passed by Congress and adopted a formal policy of regime change therefore becoming securitizing actors after the fact. The media worked to build a context that highlighted that a change in policy was necessary and then after the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act became actors

in offering policy changes that were made possible via the bill's passage. Finally, the American people did not play any role in the securitization of the issue and were generally positive about President Clinton's policy toward Iraq.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion**

The United States policy toward Iraq, over two administrations, was muddled and incoherent. This was expected because the United States lacked a formal threat identification process. Without a formal process the securitizing actor manipulated the context and inflated the Iraqi threat, which consequently led to ad-hoc decisions. Additionally, a threat identification process is a means to pursue an end of grand strategy. Without a threat identification process, attempts at grand strategy are destined to fail.

The following sections contain major takeaways for the five variables and what impact, if any, the research conducted in this thesis can have on future scholarly works. I conclude with recommendations that can address the current ad-hoc threat identification process.

### **Recommendations for Scholars**

The findings of this thesis can be used as a guide on what to look for in future studies. The first finding is that more research is needed on how a policy is made. A recent article by John Glaser, “Truth, Power, and the Academy: A Response to Hal Brands” stressed that there is a gap between scholarly work and implemented policy.<sup>1</sup> Why is there a gap between academic policy recommendations and policies implemented? One hypothesis is that current research fails to ask the question of how policy is implemented, instead focusing on why a policy is implemented. Not to undercut scholars who develop theories on why a problem or risk arises, but for the academy’s

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<sup>1</sup> John Glaser, “Truth, Power and the Academy: A Response to Hal Brands,” *War on the Rocks*, March 26, 2018 <<https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/truth-power-and-the-academy-a-response-to-hal-brands/>>.

work to be adopted at a national level more research is needed on the how question. Only after scholars develop a notion of how the threat evaluation policy process works, can they then recommend institutional changes.

The second finding is that when conducting research on securitization a comprehensive approach is more valuable than a siloed approach. A siloed approach focuses on one variable, independent of the additional national security variables. Taking a siloed approach can lead to a distortion of the securitization move, and the misidentification of the variable's proper role. If you were tasked with putting together a 1,000-piece puzzle, you wouldn't claim that you had completed the puzzle after putting 50 pieces together. Similar to putting together a puzzle, this thesis has displayed the interactive nature of the national security variables and therefore a more comprehensive approach is necessary to understand how a threat becomes a threat.

In the introduction, I claimed that the lack of a threat identification process led to ad-hoc decisions and risk inflation. One factor that facilitated risk inflation was the failure of the intelligence community. In Chapter 3's cabinet section I highlighted the intelligence community failure to predict Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Thereafter, the intelligence community compensated for its failure, by inflating the risk of an Iraq. Despite the lack of evidence to support an aggressive Iraq, the intelligence community claimed that Iraq was going to invade Saudi Arabia. This prediction never came true but it was not labeled as an intelligence failure. When an institution is punished when it fails to predict an outcome, but is not penalized for incorrectly inflating a risk, there is an intrinsic incentive for risk inflation. Therefore, the current system does not incentivize a

rational approach to a potential threat, and until the ad-hoc process is replaced analyst will be encouraged to inflate a threat.

Additionally, Chapter 4's securitization move was made in an ad-hoc manner; Congress fed up with the President's lack of action did not discuss the ramifications of the Iraq Liberation Act. Congress linked the risk of WMD's with the Saddam Hussein regime, which subsequently led to inflation of the Iraqi threat. By interlocking the WMD threat with Saddam Hussein, Congress told the President that only regime change could lead to a WMD free Iraq. The lack of Congressional debate about regime change and its subsequent effects was a sign that the securitization move was made in an ad-hoc manner.

The lack of a formal policy procedure generated an environment ripe for threat inflation. Consequently, an environment defined by risk inflation leads to any analysis that is not in line with the risk inflation to be disregarded.<sup>2</sup> Future research needs to investigate securitizing moves with the intent of further developing the ad-hoc nature of policy decisions.

### **Cabinet Findings**

The two case studies revealed that the cabinet could play one of two roles, an advisory or a complimentary facilitating actor role. These two roles are dependent on the President and whether the President embraced the role of an actor or was the intended audience. In Chapter 3, the cabinet played the role of a facilitating actor in response to the President's securitization move and adopted the President's rhetoric in testimony before Congress. Contrary to the cabinet's role during the Bush Administration, Clinton's

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<sup>2</sup> IBID.

cabinet served an advisory role. From the documents reviewed, the Clinton cabinet did not possess strong feelings about U.S. policy toward Iraq, and those views likely reflected President Clinton's views at the time. It is fair to assume that in most instances the cabinet will align with the President's views on a security issue and therefore identification of the President's role in the securitization move will likely be related to the cabinet's role.

### **The President**

Discussions related to foreign policy tend to focus on the President. However, as Chapter 4 showed, the President is not always the securitizing actor, rather (s)he can serve as the intended audience. This finding is important to future scholarship for two reasons. First, future scholars should not assume the President is the securitizing actor. Holger Stritzel warned researchers that predetermining the securitization actor led to the misconstruction of the securitization move.<sup>3</sup> As Stritzel's case study on organized crime showed, Congress performed the securitizing move before the politician, in that case Attorney General Robert Kennedy, announced that organized crime was an existential threat.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, future scholarship should consider the ramifications of the President as an audience member. As mentioned in Chapter 4, after the President approved of the securitizing move, he became the actor in charge of the securitizing move. The President had to implement the policy of another securitizing actor. This odd dynamic needs to be studied further to understand the fluidity between the role of an actor and audience.

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<sup>3</sup> Holger Stitzel, "Securitization, Power, Intertextuality: Discourse Theory and the Translations of Organized Crime," *Security Dialogue* 43 no. 6 (2012) p. 553

<sup>4</sup> IBID.

In Chapter 3, the President served in a more traditional role as a securitizing actor. President Bush made the decision to use force against Iraq, and then used his political capital to coerce Congress's approval. Further scholars can compare President Bush's treatment of Congress to past President's treatment of Congress. Previously, Congress had tried to take back the power of being a co-equal partner on matters dealing with foreign affairs, with the most prominent example being the War's Power Resolution, however past changes have failed to live up to expectation. Scholars need to develop institutional changes that would allow for Congress to regain its Constitutional place as a co-equal actor, which in turn should prevent Congress from being coerced.

### **Congress**

Congress can either play a robust role or be mitigated to agreeing with the President on matters related to foreign policy. In Chapter 3, Congress's institutional design as a body of long and slow deliberation, allowed for the President to use an accelerated timeline to diminish Congress's role as an actor. Conversely, in Chapter 4, Congress radically altered the United States policy toward Iraq, with little deliberation or debate. To solve for the former problem, Congress would be wise to accept institutional changes recommended by future scholars. A balance between the executive and legislative branches would lead to a debate on the United States interests abroad.

As Congress becomes more engaged in policy process it should be wary not to adopt the strategies seen in Chapter 4. During the Clinton administration, Congress held sham hearings, with no intellectual diversity, and forced the Clinton administration to accept a policy of regime change. Similar to how President Bush coerced Congress in Chapter 3, Congress compelled President Clinton to accept its securitization move in

Chapter 4. This is a common theme displayed through the two case studies and something that needs to be considered further.

## **The Media**

In both case studies the media sided with the securitizing actor and formed a context around the securitizing move. Often referred to as the fourth estate, the function of the media is to present unbiased information to the American electorate and to check government overreach. However, through the case studies, it becomes evident that op-ed pages generally agree with the securitizing move. This phenomenon is not contained to the securitization of Iraq. Today, the media continues to advocate for securitizing moves. Robert Wright, a visiting professor of science and religion at Union Theological Seminary in New York, wrote an article for *The Intercept* titled “How the New York Times is Making War with Iran More Likely.”<sup>5</sup> Mr. Wright wrote that the media lacked cognitive empathy, which he defined as “the ability to understand how others process information and see the world.”<sup>6</sup> For Wright, a cognitive empathy approach would interpret Iran’s foreign policy moves through the lens of Iranian national interest. However, the New York Times and Washington Post commonly interpret a state’s intention through a U.S. centric lens, which leads to a zero-sum game analysis. Rather than viewing Iran’s moves in the Middle East as an attempt to secure the stability of their

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Wright, “How The New York Times Is Making War With Iran More Likely,” *The Intercept*, March 17, 2018 <<https://theintercept.com/2018/03/17/new-york-times-iran-israel-washington-think-tanks/>>.

<sup>6</sup> IBID.



neighboring countries, the New York Times frames the issue as Iran trying to expand its regional influence.<sup>7</sup>

During the 1990's the Washington Post and New York Times op-ed pages lacked cognitive empathy. One possible explanation is that op-eds in general do not portray cognitive empathy because a writer is attempting to persuade an audience. However, the lack of opinion diversity does not allow the audience, policy makers and/or American citizen, to grasp alternative policy options. Therefore, the op-ed page becomes a reinforcement mechanism for the securitizing move. This practice does not have to continue, op-ed pages can adopt viewpoint diversity, as the Washington Post did during operation Desert Shield. Viewpoint diversity is not a silver bullet, but it will act as tool to reduce the media's bias toward the securitization actor move.

### **The American People**

The American People failed to impact the U.S. policy toward Iraq. The lack of impact is concerning, because the American people function as a check on the securitizing actor. If the American people remain unengaged, the securitizing actor does not have to fear blowback from the American people. Introduction of formal guidelines on how a state becomes a threat could increase the engagement of the American people because it would offer an avenue for the American people to voice their opinion on whether the securitizing actor followed the guidelines. Also, future studies can examine the role of the American people in ending a securitization move. When the securitization move involves war, the American people can play a significant role as an actor to end the

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<sup>7</sup> IBID.

securitizing moment. The Vietnam protest is an example of how the American people used its influence to alter the securitizing actors preferred policy.

### **Recommendations for Institutional Changes**

If the United States wants to pursue a grand strategy that is coherent, a proper way to identify threat needs to be developed. My first recommendation is there needs to be a clear definition of what constitutes the national interest. In the introduction, I noted that the NSS is written vaguely allowing policymakers to create a causal link between any security threat and the national interest. A vague national interest allows for a securitizing actor to inflate the risk that a country poses to the United States. Therefore, defining what the United States national interest is, will allow for a grand strategy that is narrow and tailored to the threats against America. Formal documents, such as the NSS, should be written as an institutional guideline that dictates the United States national interest.

Once the United States defines what constitutes the national interest then current threats need to be reevaluated. This reevaluation will force policymakers to rethink the previously identified threats through the lens of a defined national interest. This process will force policymakers to link the national interest with the identified threat, which then can be assessed by colleagues to determine whether the justification is valid.

Finally, Congress should mandate, by law, that policymakers undertake a rational cost-benefit risk assessment before securitizing a threat. If Congress is the securitizing actor then the assessment must be made available to all members before a roll call vote. These assessments can model the work of international relation scholars, or better yet can be contracted out to scholars who can present an unbiased analysis of the securitized

issue.<sup>8</sup> Forcing policymakers to conduct a cost-benefit risk assessment can stop risk inflation in two ways. First, it forces the decision maker to confront the risk that is being securitized. A formal test will reveal any bias toward risk inflation, and at the very least force a policy maker to justify their threat assessment. Second it provides the audience with a guideline with how the threat was originally assessed. The audience can then view the assessment critically and make a decision on whether the threat deserves to be securitized.

As more comprehensive scholarly work is conducted future recommendations can be made to address the reoccurring trends. Updating the War Power Resolution, restricting the cabinet's political influence, and constructing avenues to get the America people involved, are all possible institutional solutions that future scholars can examine. According to Henry Kissinger, the United States unipolar moment is over and is being replaced with a multilateral international system.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, in the coming decades America will face new challenges possibly from multiple states and non-state actors. To deal with these challenges, the United States needs a coherent grand strategy, which is dependent on a threat identification process.

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<sup>8</sup> For an example of risk assessment see: John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "Responsible Counterterrorism Policy," *Cato Institute* no. 755, September 10, 2014 <<https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa755.pdf>>.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Kissinger, *World Order*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2014) P. 2.

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